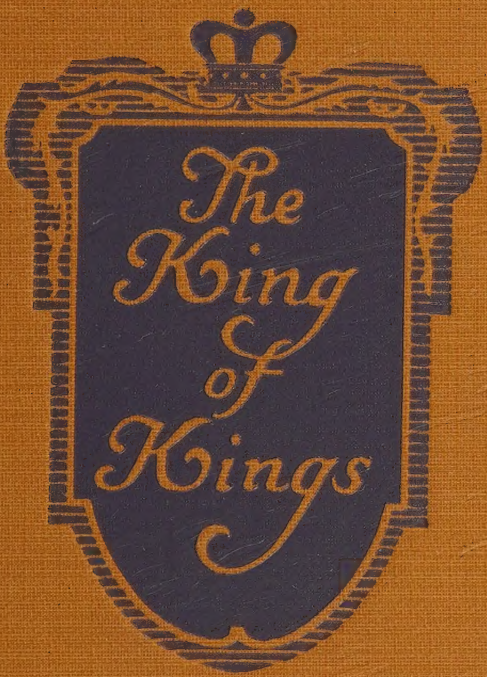

By Jeanie Macpherson
and Henry MacMahon

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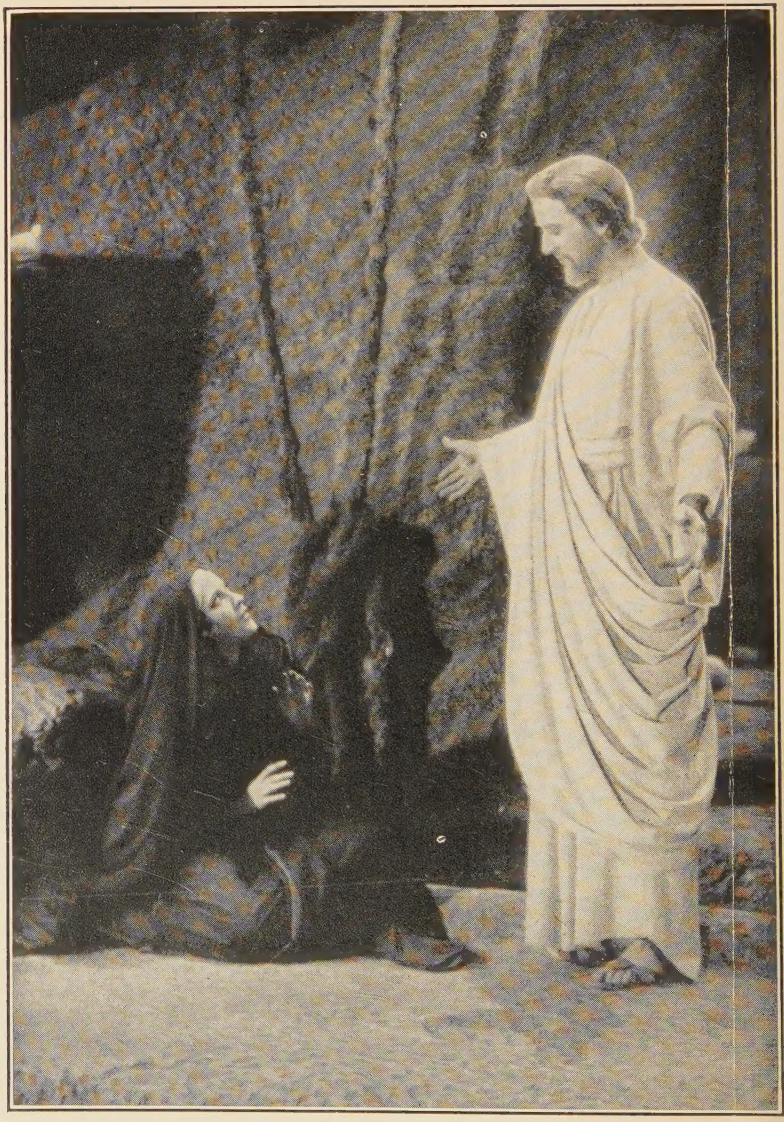

A Cecil B. DeMille Production. *The King of Kings.*

MARY MAGDALENE SPEAKS TO THE RISEN LORD IN THE GARDEN.

THE KING OF KINGS

A NOVEL

BY
HENRY MACMAHON
AND
JEANIE MACPHERSON

BASED ON
CECIL B. DE MILLE'S
Motion Picture Production
"THE KING OF KINGS"
BY JEANIE MACPHERSON

ILLUSTRATED WITH SCENES FROM
THE PHOTOPLAY

GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

Made in the United States of America

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Made in the United States of America

FOREWORD

EACH generation has produced its dramatic or historical version of the Galilean Carpenter who gave His life for a great principle. It is possible that our own generation's contribution will be the beautiful and inspired screen spectacle which Cecil B. De Mille has created after years of study and preparation, THE KING OF KINGS.

The noted producer was prompted to undertake it by his lifelong ambition to dramatize the story of Jesus the Man of Sorrows which he had learned at his father's knee; and his final determination to make the Picture came only after he had discussed the subject with leaders of public sentiment, savants and scholars, and obtained the cooperation of all the cinema companies.

Twenty-five hundred authorities were consulted in research, with Dr. George Reid Andrews, Father D. A. Lord, S. J., Clifford Howard and Dr. J. M. Alkow aiding the scenarist Jeanie Macpherson. The film work as it progressed developed into the greatest cooperative effort the united motion picture industry has yet achieved,—the technical and architectural resources of every great California studio being placed at the Producer's disposal, and eminent actors from many companies vying for parts.

Under such sympathetic auspices De Mille's lofty and single-minded purpose of picturing the immortal story enlisted every one of his wide-reaching personal resources as artist and creator, and THE KING OF KINGS was planned and worked out in the thought of great reverence.

The authors of our novelization of THE KING OF KINGS have followed as far as possible the chronological sequence of the De Mille Picture. No claim is made to biographical completeness. The sequence—crowded as it is with beautiful and dramatic events culminating in the climax on Calvary—deals with the last year and a half of the life of Jesus among His fellow men.

They have told their story in the crisp reportorial language of our own time, and along with the narrative they have sketched in a swift-moving panorama the historical setting of those times in such a manner that the reader, regardless of faith or creed, is almost certain to gain a clear and unforgettable relief-picture of THE KING OF KINGS and His ministry to all men.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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THE KING OF KINGS

CHAPTER I

TWO GALILEAN TRAVELERS

On a pleasant evening almost exactly nineteen hundred years ago, two travelers were on their way to Tiberias from a visit to Magdala, the so-called "city of pleasure."

The journey led through a fruitful and well-watered land, almost like a continuous garden and dotted by several cities and villages. It was the ancient Galilee, part of the possessions of Herod Antipas under the suzerainty of the Roman Emperor.

To the southwest lay the Roman-ruled province of Judæa, with Jerusalem as the centre of its national life and the Temple as the seat of national worship.

The religion of Jehovah was the national religion of Judæa and Galilee, although foreign oppressors had replaced the native Priest-Kings, and the people lay under the double

impost of Temple tithes and Roman taxes. Throughout the long oppression the Jews dreamed of a Messiah (the Anointed One) who should come in power and glory and restore the kingdom of Heaven. Meantime the Pharisees kept the faith by minute observance of the Law of Moses and the oral tradition, the more worldly Sadducees controlled the rich privileges and takings of the Temple, and a third party named the Zealots esteemed religious patriotism to be the highest duty and oft broke out in armed risings against the authority of Cæsar.

The country through which our travelers passed was thus in a confused welter of conflicting tendencies and currents; an uneasy state that, though outwardly calm at times, was like the modern Balkans in its possibilities of hate and sedition. Nowhere in Jewry were the Zealots so numerous as in Galilee. There, too, many false Messiahs had sprung up, summoned followers to their standards, and perished under the superior might of Rome.

Yet few cultivable areas in the wide world were more attractive and beautiful than the region our travelers traversed. The fields were under the plough or dotted with groves of olive,

fig and pepper trees. Beautiful vistas a-down mountain slopes or along valleys revealed the Sea of Galilee sparkling in the distance. The farmers in the fields, the merchants and fishermen of the seaside villages, were strong, alert and industrious. The housewife plied her loom; the rosy-cheeked Galilean girls fetched water from the wells or aided in the household tasks. Now and again across the country—following the great high road from Damascus—came one of the picturesque armed cavalcades of commerce, bringing the rich fabrics and spices of the East to the western depots of merchandise.

Our travelers belonged to a class above the common people and their errand had been the pursuit of pleasure. Let us look at them more closely as they jog along on their gayly caparisoned pillions borne by the strong and sure-footed asses indigenous to that part of Palestine.

The elder of the men was rubicund and smooth shaven. His rich dress and free manner betokened a banker magnate of the new commercial town of Tiberias. The other man, somewhat younger, was carefully garbed and barbered after the fashion of the rich Judæan.

He wore the outer tokens of his Jerusalem cut, but with a foppishness of apparel and a nice trimming of the beard that marked him a Pharisee exquisite.

"By this time to-morrow," remarked the Judæan, "I shall know that I have won my wager."

"What wager?" replied the Tiberian idly. It was evident he was answering out of respect to the other, for there was no curiosity in his tone.

"Why, the wager that thou sawest made!" cried the man of Judæa reproachfully. "The Jerusalem purse of gold that I placed against the Prince of Persia's ruby." He looked at the elderly Galilean more searchingly. "Verily I believe thou sawest and heardest naught, at least to proper sense and understanding, after that she-devil Mary of Magdala choked thee!"

"Talk not of her," said the many-wrinkled Tiberian, wearily. "Tell me of thy bet, and what is to be the issue—"

"But it was of her, and with her, that the wager took place," interrupted the Judæan. "How can I tell thee if thou objectest to the name of our hostess?"

"Very well, then. But sing not her praises

nor rave about her beauty, or I shall never own thee friend again!"

The middle-aged Judæan reviewed Mary of Magdala in his mind's eye. It was her house that the men had left, less than an hour before. How could he ever forget it,—that palace of pleasure with its glorious exedra marked by marble and onyx pillars, its flower garden and swan lake, its grand banquet hall where a Lucullus-like feast and the wines of Chios and Lesbos were served mid apparatus of the highest luxury to the accompaniment of sweet and sensuous music!

The great of many lands had been there: Roman noble, Persian prince, Egyptian "Pharaoh," Herodian princes, Judæan aristocrats, Galilean gallants all brought together by one common tie, the homage of Mary of Magdala. A native Jewess and the loveliest of her sex, famed far and wide for her conquests of the rich and great of this world, she was indeed the brightest and most attractive ornament of the city of Magdala, the wicked "city of pleasure."

But her birthday fiesta (the Judæan now recollected) had been a scene of fury rather than of mirth. The queen-like girl had mocked the

courtiers by bringing out her African leopard —a great, half-wild feline of steely muscles and savage, cruel mouth—and kissing and fondling it. She had sent a too insistent Roman admirer sprawling, had repelled with flashing eyes and scowling looks all others who sought her favor. Only two of the men in the company (as it happened) had known the secret back of the cause of Marys unhappiness, and those two were the present travelers of our story.

The Judæan's mind flashed back to the journey to Magdala with its midday halt at Capernaum. On a crowded doorstep of the seaside village—within a courtyard and beyond a roadway blocked by crippled and infirm persons of all conditions of life—he had identified a handsome, beardless young man (seen first in company with a giant of a Fisherman) as the well-known Judas of Kerioth, son of the merchant tanner of the Temple hides.

He had pointed out the handsome youth to the Tiberian. "What is he doing here?" the Judæan had asked.

"It is said there is a new worker of miracles in Capernaum," the Tiberian had replied, with his greater familiarity with Galilean affairs.

"They say He spoke in the synagogue last Sabbath, since which He has ministered in the House of Miracles yonder, and undoubtedly this Judas of Kerioth is one of His followers . . . The name of the Healer? I think it is Jesus of Nazareth!"

All the courtiers in Magdala knew that Judas, a most personable youth from the aristocratic quarter of Jerusalem, was well liked by Mary, had indeed frequented her pleasure routs and assemblies till of late. But neither she nor any of them could possibly divine why or how or where he had disappeared. And so it happened that as one of the feasters sought to occupy the garlanded but empty chair of Judas, and others openly asked her to forget him and give them favor, her sullenness became rage which was intensified to insensate fury when the incautious Tiberian uttered the rash words: "I know where thy Judas is!" . . .

The Judæan looked at his friend and fellow traveler again. The marks of Mary's fingers still scarred his neck. The flushed blood vessels of the skin, the labored breathing, were after effects of the violence with which she had attacked. Small wonder that the magnate desired not to discuss the Queen of Magdala. How

vividly the whole scene flashed back in the Judæan's memory!

He saw the sudden onset of the crazed girl imagining that the banker was withholding some hidden knowledge of an entanglement; her gripping him around the throat with her ten fingers till he fairly choked; his release by a friendly Roman guest from her terrible clutches; and his gasping acknowledgment, after breath was partly recovered and accompanied by a series of terrible gasps and swallows:

"I-saw-Judas-but-with-a-band-of-beggars—led-by-a-Carpenter-from-Nazareth!"

And then her scornful laughter, echoing far down the halls of the Palace at Magdala! "No carpenter," she had cried, "can take Judas from Mary of Magdala, I will have him back within the hour!" Suiting the word to the act, she clapped her hands for her servants, and started to leave the banqueting hall.

The high flung challenge—and the impending breakup of the festivities—roused the guests. They crowded toward her, all except the collapsed and badly worsted Tiberian; each of them offering a wager that her plan would fail. . . .

The Judæan remembered that she took and covered all the wagers gayly, triumphantly, like a crowned Queen of Love avid of tribute and sure of dominating. He himself had dangled a purse of clinking gold coins before her, and she had matched it with a gem snatched from the turban of her willing vassal the Prince of Persia. . . .

"Well, then," he resumed his conversation with his shaken fellow traveler, "the wager was that she could not go to Capernaum and bring Judas back,—most of the guests stayed at Magdala to await the issue. You and I alone—"

"Why didst thou not stay?" interrupted the Tiberian.

"Verily my purse of gold is in good custody there, and likewise the Persian's gem which will also be mine to-morrow e'en. I thought it better to bring thee home to Tiberias—"

"What was the manner of her going?" asked the banker, momentarily forgetting detestation of the proud and cruel beauty who had misused him.

"In high state, in the chariot drawn by her six zebra steeds—the gift of the King of Nubia —and driven by the bronze man her Nubian

charioteer. Four slave girls had dressed her gorgeously, and the perfumes of the Grand Emir of Arabia Felix were strewn over her. She was excited, gay, defiant,—almost happy—"

"And what said she?"

"As the men waved their farewells and as the black groom released the bridle reins and the striped steeds dashed away at the flick of the Nubian's whip, her words and her arrogant laugh came back:

" 'We go to call upon this Carpenter, and rest assured our quest for Judas shall not be fruitless!' "

There was a pause in the talk as the plodding beasts of burden with their wealthy riders entered a more difficult part of the way, coming down the shoulder of a mountain. The Tiberian, meditating many things, was slow to answer. "What deemest thou now of her?" asked finally the Judæan.

"Nothing—save that, as between man-killers her leopard and herself, the white one is the more dangerous! But for that young Roman who unbent her terrible claws, she must have strangled me to death," he added ruefully. "I care not what becomes of her, or what good or

ill fortune she meets. . . . I prithee—as a friend and brother, I say it—let us forget her nor ever mention her name!''

They resumed the journey in silence.

CHAPTER II

THE PROPHECIES OF A MESSIAH

> "And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots . . . Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations . . . And the Lord shall be King over all the earth."

"PEACE hath come to the borders of Galilee," remarked the Judæan after a time. Seeking to divert gloomy thoughts, he called his companion's attention to the fertility of the fields and the uninterrupted labor of the toilers in the westering sun.

"Yea," replied the other, "after Rome's legions helped him defeat the archers and swordsmen of Aretas, Herod Antipas hath sat easy in his tetrarchy—"

"Yet methinks he gives the disturbers of opinions too much lenity," argued the Pharisee.

"He feels that he is obliged to, since he unwillingly beheaded John the Prophet at the behest of Salome."

"Thou couldst tell me much of that if thou wouldst," suggested the Judæan.

"There is little to tell save that John denounced the monarch for taking his own brother's wife Herodias and wedding her, contrary to our Law.

"She bore John bitter hatred in consequence, and after Herod imprisoned the Prophet she caused her daughter Salome to dance before Herod and beg as a boon the head of the Prophet on a silver charger. Since then Herod hath feared greatly—some say he is tortured by remorse. He knoweth that certain of the Prophet's followers are joined to Jesus of Nazareth."

The fame of John the Prophet (known in Sacred Writ as John the Baptist) had penetrated into Judæa. In fact, many Judæans were among the throngs baptized by John in the waters of the Jordan. This caused the younger man to propound a pertinent question:

"Is it true, O Tiberian, that the Prophet baptized Jesus in the river Jordan and hailed him as One greater than himself?"

"Thus it is reported throughout Galilee," was the answer. "But the dark mind of Herod,

revolving its guilt and a prey to courtly isolation, oft imagines Jesus to be the resurrected John, like one risen from the dead,—and fears accordingly! It seems unlikely, therefore," concluded the man of Tiberias, "that Herod whose mind is filled with fantasies will dare to attack the new Leader."

"We who dwell in Jerusalem," replied the other traveler, "reck not of your frequent Messiahs, and this one too shall pass!"

"But do you not then believe in *the* Messiah?" questioned the Tiberian. "It is clearly prophesied that He shall come!"

"Yes, in power and in glory—but not as a humble son of the people."

"Do you imagine so? Remember the words of Isaiah: 'Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. . . . And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow forth out of his roots.' "

The fellow traveler countered the quotation quickly: "Descended from the stock of David assuredly, nevertheless a mighty King, for doth not the Scripture say: 'Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. . . . And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in

that day shall there be one Lord, and His name One!' "

"Yet do not forget," reminded the elderly Galilean, "the nature of his mission: 'With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.

" 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; a little child shall lead them. . . .

" 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' "

"But how then," argued the high-born Judæan, "shall one judge of the coming of the true Messiah, if his origin be humble and His mission, peace?"

"By the event," replied the more liberalized Jew of Tiberias. "It may be furthest from his desire to overthrow Rome. Rather, His coming may be in order to rule His people in equity and mercy; to spread his principles by peaceful means throughout the world; to do away with legalism and formality and inculcate the true religion of loving-kindness."

"Surely thou canst not mean," cried the as-

tonished Judæan, "that the King would abate one jot or tittle of our written and oral Law! Plainly I see," and he wagged a free hand in grave disapproval of the other's doctrine, "that the Grecian schools of Tiberias have liberalized thee and put thee out of touch with Jewry."

"By no means as much as thou thinkest. Yearly I go to Jerusalem and offer up the Sacrifice; I pay my tithing even as thou, and out of my plenty I have built a synagogue. But the Galileans—all of them—are freer than thou art; they seek a faith of the heart rather than of the head, and yearn for a Messiah that shall bless them and emancipate them!"

"Precious little good have ye had," mocked the literalist, "of the scores of claimants that have sprung up among you! The newest is likely to go the way of all the rest. A noisy commotion, accompanied by foolish Zealotic acts; an upraising of a military standard; sharp outlaw work in the hills, perhaps, or the occupation of a few minor villages; then, the quick, summary vengeance of Rome—or of Herod—"

"It may all happen as you say, yet have I heard most unquestionably that Jesus of Nazareth is a man of peace!"

A Cecil B. DeMille Production. *The King of Kings.*

MARY OF MAGDALA WITH HER EIGHT-ZEBRA TEAM, SALLIES FORTH TO SUBDUE THE LOWLY CARPENTER OF NAZARETH.

"If he innovates," was the Judæan's answer, "the elders of the synagogues will take action; if on the other hand he questions the authority of our High Priest at Jerusalem, the whole weight of Jewry will be against him. . . . But I predict that his career will end here in obscurity, and that our children and children's children will not even know his name!"

The elderly magnate of the chief city of Galilee did not at once reply. . . . But later he spoke much of the enterprise, prowess and hardihood of her inhabitants, her unrivaled natural resources, her opulence and municipal splendor so greatly enhanced by the architecture of the Herods. The Judæan's slighting reference to simple-hearted Galilee had touched a sore point of provincial pride, whereon he expressed himself strongly. And the Judæan was obliged to acknowledge the truth of his contention that many good things originated in Galilee.

They were now coming down the slope to a full view, in the last rays of the sun, of the scenic beauties of Tiberias, its white turrets and pinnacles crowned with gold, its streets and lower edifices in shadow, the now dark-blue Sea

of Galilee forming a perfect background to the picture.

No more was said of the humble Worker of Miracles who had come out of rustic Nazareth to minister in the seashore village of Capernaum. The Tiberian's thoughts were of home and rest, towards which the trotting asses were now rapidly bringing them, and he invited his friend to share the hospitality of his house to which, with its characteristic Jewish interior, were super-added the ornaments and the apparatus of luxurious Hellenic living.

CHAPTER III

THE HEALER FROM NAZARETH

"And it was noised that He was in the house. . . . And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch as there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door."

Capernaum. The eve of Sabbath. The storekeepers were about to close their bazaars, and the crowds about the House of Miracles began to be restive at not getting the ministry of the Man within.

All day long an unending line of cripples, palsied, blind, deaf-and-dumb, or mentally ill, had filed through that gateway and one by one had been admitted by the giant Fisherman at the door.

The procession still continued but the latecomers were warned there was little chance of receiving until the next week the benediction of the tired Minister. Across the crowd, for perhaps the fiftieth time, a little blind girl threaded her way. She too was tired—discouraged and

unhappy. For no one in that throng had seemed capable—or willing—to give her guidance and access, and now it appeared that she would have to go back to her widowed mother: helpless as before!

As she brushed past the bystanders, cautiously feeling her path, she was crying softly: "Tell me where He is—I cannot find Him!"

Unmindful of the child, a village gossip and a beggar were arguing with each other. The old man talked quaveringly of their Messianic hope and the mighty deeds of the Worker of Miracles in the house up yonder, the virago cutting him short by the shrill dictum: "Some say He is a king, but He cannot be, because He does not wear a crown!"

A little boy came leaping down the steps which Peter the Fisherman had temporarily cleared, and as he did so his face was bright with joy and in one hand he contemptuously upheld a crutch.

"I can walk! I can walk!" he cried.

The child had a beautiful face albeit touched with the childish pain and sorrow of years; his body was in rags, revealing arms, torso and limbs, now beautifully straight and supple. He seemed to know everyone, and to the first by-

standers eagerly explained the wonderful thing that had happened to him. He was pointing to his leg, once a useless member so that his right side had had to be supported by the crutch, but now straightened and strong, and he was pointing back to the upper floor of the house where the miracle had been wrought.

An aged near-sighted beggar bent towards the boy and asked with forefinger jerked upwards: "How much did He charge thee for thy cure?" The little fellow looked slightly puzzled, replied the cure was without money and without price! . . . Boy-like, he threw the crutch far from him in a gesture of disgust,—making a "mouth" at the hateful object, rolling his eyes and sticking out his tongue. He was never going to have anything more to do with that crutch, as long as he lived! To him it was the embodiment of some evil power that had clutched him and hurt him until his great and wonderful Friend—a gentle Man with soft voice and healing hands—had expelled the evil power and set him free.

But the stick carelessly thrown hit Simeon the Pharisee on the turban. . . .

Among the onlookers at these unusual scenes, Simeon, and the scribe Annas, and Malchus, the

captain of the Levite soldiery at Jerusalem, were the most noteworthy. Near the courtyard stood a knot of Roman legionaries, with their hands on their planted spears; and, mixed with the unlettered bystanders, were here and there members of the strictest sect, as well as liberals inclined to the new doctrine. But the Pharisee, the Scribe and the Captain had come up to Galilee from Jerusalem in order to spy out what the Man of Nazareth did. Already the stricter sectaries who had heard the Carpenter in synagogue had communicated the need of watchfulness on the part of the authorities of the Temple.

In appearance Simeon was tall and courtly, censorious in manner, severe of speech. Less worldly than the Judæan Pharisee whom we met on the road from Magdala, he was better versed in legalism and very close to the hierarchy which had enriched him. The scribe Annas carried the scroll of the Law. He had the watchful look of a ferret, whilst the captain Malchus, a stalwart youth, represented the Levitic authority of the group. . . .

The Pharisees were so sure of their standing with God that they despised their fellow men. The ironical and contemptuous look on

Simeon's face ludicrously changed to anger as he realized the nature of the totally unexpected hit and saw the little boy who was responsible for it. He had been listening rather idly to the child's glowing praise of the Man from Nazareth. But now—as he grabbed up the stick which had hit him—he saw the opportunity of teaching the "worthless little beggar" a sound lesson.

Coming down angrily to the boy and menacingly waving the crutch, "Be thou warned that this Man,"—he said, pointing the crutch to the upper room— "is not of God." The Pharisee grew even more impressive. "The man thou thinkest helped thee is but a vile sinner. Why, he keepeth not the Sabbath Day!"

"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not," replied the boy. "One thing I know—that I was lame before, and now I walk!"

The very appropriateness of the answer enraged the Pharisee. He raised the crutch that was in his hand, to strike.

As he was about to bring it down on the little fellow's head, a great hand and strong arm pulled the boy out of harm's way whilst the other hand and arm grabbed the crutch above where Simeon had grasped it, and de-

flected its course upward. A big body and bearded, rugged features intervened between the Puritan and the boy, and a bass voice modulated to kindly accent said, addressing the child:

"And who is he that will harm thee—if thou art a follower of that which is good?"

It was Peter the Fisherman disciple, the guardian of the door, who thus spoke. His great face and bulk of body turned towards the Pharisee. There was such an unspoken demand in Peter's eyes that Simeon give up the crutch, the shifty Pharisee looked around to his supporters. . . .

But they were busy. Their attention (as everyone's) was attracted by a man starting to speak in a loud tone from just outside the window of the house. The tumult made by the orator and by the growing response of the populace, stopped for the nonce the emeute of Peter and Simeon, and Peter recovered the boy's crutch. . . .

The man at the window (who was none other than that Judas of Kerioth about whom the travelers in the opening episode talked) was engaged in rousing the people's Messianic hopes; saying, as he pointed significantly to the

upper story of the house where the healings were in progress:

"My friends, He will set up His kingdom in Jerusalem. . . . He will throw off the yoke of Rome . . . our country will belong to us again, and then once more we shall celebrate our Holy Land as Israel's Judæa for the Jews!"

The speaker possessed a certain eloquence, enhanced by his bold and handsome features and clear-cut address. To some measure of personal magnetism, he added cunning of method. One person after another, he asked personally and pointedly if they did not want their fellow Galilean—the Miracle Worker who revealed his superhuman power by curing their sick and making their blind to see—for their King of Jerusalem. And that mob of poor country folk—among whom was instinctive the desire of revolt from the foreign yoke—was gradually being worked up to frenzy. Individuals in it were already shouting and hurrahing for "our King," whom Judas sedulously pointed out to be of the very "seed of David and stock of Jesse."

The Roman legionaries straightened up, no longer resting idly against their spears. Unable to catch more than a solitary word now

and again, they nevertheless became alert as they wondered uneasily what strange new madness was being conjured. . . . The more intelligent Capernians were frankly displeased, having no mind for sedition in their peaceful community. . . . But the spies Annas and Malchus were eagerly taking in every word to see how far the orator would go, and Simeon exchanged glances with Peter, smiling satirically to the Fisherman the while he pointed upward toward Judas. It was as good as if he had said:

"Rebellion against Rome—don't you see what that means? The follower of your Master stirreth up trouble!"

Peter comprehended the byplay and the gesture. For once the Pharisee had scored. Now Peter realized that the speech was purely the folly of the ambitious Disciple, and in no way presented the thoughts of the Man within, though Simeon might seek to make it appear so. The Fisherman was alarmed and worried. He immediately went over to stop the speaker.

He plucked him by the sleeve, only to be thrown off. He plucked at him again, and finally arrested and held the orator's attention at the end of one of his well-rounded periods.

"You are unwise to incite the people to rebellion," cried Peter. "The Master preaches peace and yonder are Roman soldiers with swords."

By this time the three soldiers had been joined by a fourth who knew Aramaic, the language of the country. He was translating the latest outbursts of Judas. One of the legionaries suggested putting a stop to it. But the others laughed contemptuously and said it would be better just to jeer at the cheap oratory.

But the young man in the black cloak and with the finely gesturing hands, had no mind for signals of warning. Habituated to the legionaries in Jerusalem, he thought them no more than human puppets incapable of acting without authority from above, and felt certain that the Zealots of Galilee—notwithstanding a Scribe or a Pharisee here and there—could always be counted on to support a new temporal Messiah. He turned hotly to Peter:

"Who gave you this authority over me? It is Jesus—not thou—who is going to be the King!"

Nevertheless Peter pressed the attack. He had a stout grip on Judas's arm nor did he intend to let go. And as Judas gave him back

argument for argument, a period was put to the public oratory, and most of the gaping crowd, warned of the momentary approach of the Sabbath, dispersed their several ways. Finally Judas and Peter, alone, were left arguing at the window, while in the open courtyard below the gaze of Simeon, Annas and Malchus was concentrated on the long and almost imperceptibly moving shadow cast by the indicator of a sun-dial.

"Let us watch Him," Simeon had said, pointing the ministry in the upper room, "whether He undertaketh to heal on the Sabbath Day!"

CHAPTER IV

THE LITTLE BLIND GIRL

"Lord, I have never seen the Light!"

The little blind girl was groping in front of John Mark, the boy cured of his lameness.

Her hand pulled at a donkey's bridle. The owner of the donkey pushed her away.

She stumbled into Mark, crying in her discouraged little voice: "Where is He—I cannot find Him. The people near the door said I could not go in" . . . and she pointed to her closed eyes.

"I will take you inside to see HIM!" answered little Mark warmly. His own eyes were moist with the sight of her pitiable misfortune. Rising, he took her small hand and guided her through the nondescript assembly, shielding her with his arm when danger from donkey or camel threatened, and bringing her at last to the rear of the house where a large window looked down from the second floor. . . .

The Carpenter of Nazareth was weary. All day long He had been ministering to sufferers from every kind of ailment mental or physical or both, and the healing powers within Him were heavily taxed.

Comfort for the distressed; lucidness to clouded minds; sweet peace to the nerve-tormented; ability to walk unto the lame or crippled; fresh vision to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the feeble, and heartiness to the bowed-down—Is it any wonder that the self-imposed Task at times almost staggered Him and gave momentary feeling of helplessness of restoring and renewing humanity!

Nearly a dozen men had already found in Him the mystic qualities of leadership, of surpassing brain and will and soul, that had led them to plight their troth to His Cause. . . . They were grouped loosely about the central figure in the upper room now, all but Judas and Peter who were arguing downstairs: John and James and Thomas; Andrew, Philip, Thaddeus, James the Less, whilst the once fiery-eyed Simeon the Zealot, now strangely tamed and softened by the soul of the Master, stood staring in the doorway. . . . Not theirs to lead, only to follow; not theirs to be ex-

hausted, but only to absorb. . . . Somehow Peter alone knew how to fend off the most exhausting attacks upon His vitality, to try to save Him; but often Peter was wrong! . . . It was the end of the day, and the Healer felt that He could accomplish but little more.

In an adjoining room sat a gentle-faced woman at a loom. She was beautiful with a spiritual beauty, utter kindliness in her sweet glance,—anon smiling as she thought some pleasant thought: the Mother in her large eyes and protective mien!

The doves were coming in for their supper, the Mother arose and fed them, and oft they fluttered to her hand, arms and shoulders as to a friend. . . .

What a contrast one might have seen in the courtyard below! Simeon, Annas and Malchus watching the shadow of the sun-dial creeping to the Sabbath hour, hoping that they might entrap the Man above in good works on the Sabbath. . . .

There was a slight surprise in the Mother's face as she noted the doves fluttering away from her hand and body. She realized there

must be some disturbance or other that scattered her feathered guests, and presently she saw a pathetic little figure—that of a small girl—being raised slowly upward through the window embrasure; and looking down further, she found that it was the young John Mark who was lifting the girl up and through the opening.

The Mother smiled, and her smile changed most wistfully as the little blind child whom she received in her arms, said:

"Please, can you tell me where He is?"

The boy followed. The two children, the girl in her arms, and the boy alongside, went with her into the inner room. . . . Hark, what was that? It must be the sound of the sacred horn announcing the hour of the opening Sabbath. . . . Down at the sun-dial, one might have noted the captain Malchus pointing up to the figure of the Sabbath herald trumpeting on the roof, and Simeon and Annas gravely nodding to each other. "If he healeth after the hour, he breaketh the Sabbath!" Simeon and Annas exchanged a look of triumph.

The Mother brought the blind girl into the presence of the Carpenter. "My Son, this little

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JESUS TAKES IN HIS ARMS A LAMB THAT HAS STRAYED IN THE TEMPLE.

one needs Thy help!" was all she said, but the words bespoke her deepest sympathy and love.

And then was witnessed a sight perhaps of all sights the most infinitely pathetic and moving, the spectacle of a blind child begging vision, falling on its knees and lifting hands in supplication:

"Lord, I have never seen the flowers nor the light. Wilt Thou make me whole?"

Peter and Judas had stopped their argument, and had come up to the door, watching. The response of the Minister was as unexpected to them as it was to all in that room:

"I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness."

Rays of light began to fall across the face of the little girl, growing brighter and brighter. . . . The eyes were still closed but not so tightly shut. It seemed as if the light rays were acting on quickened retina and nerves, for as her eyes partly opened she experienced a confused sensation of brightness without any definite points or lines at all. It was echoed in her glad cry: "I begin—to see—the light!" as she rubbed her trembling eyelids with her hand. . . .

Gradually objects became clear before the little girl. Through the beams, very dimly and indistinctly at first, was outlined the face of the Man of Nazareth.

"I can see—I can see!" was the child's glad cry, in sheer ecstasy of her glorious joy, for now the lids of her eyes for the first time opened wide, looking at the gentle Healer!

The eyes of the Madonna and of Peter were moist with tears of tenderness and joy; all the Disciples felt deeply moved, and there was a smile on Judas's lips as if to say: "Behold the works of my Master!" although the look was mingled with somewhat of question and puzzlement too.

The child approached still nearer to Jesus. In rapturous gratitude she wished to kiss the hem of His gown. But the Carpenter, patting her head tenderly in blessing, raised her from her knees and held her face in both His hands for a moment. He smiled down into it, saying:

"Go home to thy mother and tell her and them in the house what good things the Lord hath done for thee."

This Man was the kindest person this unfortunate little wayfarer through life had ever met.

She could express her deep thanks and love only by rushing into His arms and burying her face in His shoulder robe, and He must needs pick her up in His sheltering embrace and bear her to the window before confiding her to the care of Mark again, whilst the beautiful Madonna kissed her Son on the forehead.

But what is the thought of that dark-browed handsome Disciple from Judæa, the one we have seen urging the people to elevate the Man of Nazareth as a temporal king?

"If He would only heal the rich instead of the poor," complained Judas to Peter, "we could establish the Kingdom now."

CHAPTER V

MARY MAGDALENE

"I that speak unto you, am He!"

"WE go to call upon the Carpenter of Nazareth, and rest assured our quest for Judas shall not be fruitless!"

Our readers will remember the arrogant farewell of Mary of Magdala to her courtiers (as narrated by the rich Judæan to his friend) and her setting out in state for Capernaum, having learned that Judas of Kerioth was a follower of Jesus in the ministry there. It seemed to the proud beauty a simple matter to remove the young man from the influence of the humble Teacher and bring him back in triumph to her festivities at Magdala.

Soon after Jesus had performed the miracle on the little blind child, Mary's impetuous journey reached its end.

Because of the ceremonial observance of Sabbath Eve, the street in front of the house of miracles was no longer blocked. The few

remaining bystanders or passers by jumped nimbly out of the way as the bronze Nubian slave, her charioteer, drove the six mettlesome zebras down the roadway and into the courtyard. The chariot stopped before the door. Some of her servants held the bridles. Others laid a carpet on the ground for the haughty beauty to walk upon. They also cleared the way for her obsequiously, and her dainty foot was soon upon the bottom stone of the steps.

Standing in the chariot, she had asked loudly, "Where is this Carpenter of Nazareth?" But everyone was too astonished to answer. So she must find out for herself, and approached Peter who was again guarding the gate.

That huge, rugged figure blocked the doorway completely! The name and fame of Mary of Magdala were widely known. Her bold dress, sparkling gems, and the strong perfume emanating from her person, strengthened his conviction that it was none other than the siren. "Thou wicked woman," admonished the blunt, plain-spoken doorkeeper, "such as thou may not enter this holy place!"

Peter folded his arms and scowled fiercely at her. It was a way Peter had when anything seemed to threaten the peace or security of

his Master. He was like some great dane or wolfhound, upstanding and dangerous!

The scornful look that Mary gave him was met by equal measure of scorn. She was forced to call indignantly to her Nubian charioteer: "Come hither—push this worthless fellow out of the way!"

Peter and the bronze servitor from Africa were well matched. Against Peter's giant proportions were contrasted the lean sinuosity of the Nubian, his quickness of movement, his cunning of feint, attack and parry. Besides which, he was armed. . . . And the lance he now held in his hand was poised menacingly whilst Peter made as if to seize a bludgeon to do battle, and surely he would have given at least an equal account for himself.

Yet at the very moment of struggle the Disciple's hand was stayed. His Master spoke from above words of reproof and warning. They bade him admit the visitor, saying that to such persons was His ministry. And those words—spoken in a gentle tone without heat and enforced by deep moral authority—had the power to disarm this hostile giant of a man and to send him bowing behind the door, admitting the sinful creature in all her triumph.

The Carpenter was still in the upper room. His tired brain was resting the while He found bodily solace and occupation in the mechanical unwinding of the leather thong from Little Mark's crutch. His companions now and again aiding Him in the simple task, He asked Judas for a knife. The man of Kerioth brought Him a carpenter's blade from a number of tools just beyond His own seat; and with the familiar implement in His hand the Carpenter of Nazareth began to cut a belt from the thong.

As Judas crossed the room after this small errand, one of his fellow disciples nudged him and pointed down the stair to a woman coming up. At first, in the shadows, he could not distinguish who she was; but when she had completed the ascent and had come into the clearer light of the room, he recognized her and exclaimed "Mary of Magdala!" She saw him too and they greeted each other; Judas, somewhat with the air of pleased surprise; but Mary, swift, imperious, and after one appraising glance at his new habit and mien, looking beyond him for the Person who had wrought his indifference towards her.

"Where is this Man of Nazareth who holds thee from Mary of Magdala?" she cried, contemptuously.

No one gave answer, perhaps out of awe for their Leader, perhaps out of mere astonishment at her bold, flaunting splendor in such a place. . . . Only from the far end of the room came the quiet words, in a voice vibrant with sympathy:

"Mary, what seekest thou?"

Turning in the direction of the sound, Mary looked at the Carpenter for the first time. She quickly left Judas and haughtily approached his Master. Slowly the face of the Healer lifted from His leather work. The great eyes of the Man were fixed upon her. It was now a sombre face, the golden beard almost brown in the setting dusk; the ere smiling lips closed, the brow dark, the eyes suddenly accusative! The girl somehow felt she was facing a solemn tribunal and an accusing Judge before Whom she could not jeer nor laugh. Uncertain and frightened, strangely affected by the Leader's gaze, she returned to Judas, putting hand on his arm to seek safety and at the same time to make definite inquiry.

"Who is this Carpenter?" she asked. Came

the words from the Man who had just looked deep into the blackness of her heart:

"I that speak unto you, am He!"

The challenge of the tone and glance again caused Mary to draw near to Him. She attempted bravado, but failed miserably. She started to turn once more to Judas and then turned back again to meet challenge with defiance, but she broke a third time before that wondrous gaze which seemed to penetrate her inmost spirit. Vainly she tried to avert it, shielding her face with her hands. Shuddering, she sidled away; then circled around the white-robed Figure twice, each time trying to recapture her arrogant self, but in the end—in utter abject defeat—lowering her head and putting forth her hands as if to beg mercy. . . .

For Mary, through one of those marvelous and sometimes instant transformations of wickedness in the presence of Divine goodness, knew herself convicted of sin. Her life had been cursed by lust, avarice, pride, envy, indolence, self-indulgence, anger,—demons of the mind not less real than the plagues of the body. Oh, how she longed to lay the burden of her sins at the feet of Jesus and with a happy heart follow the path of goodness!

What a blessing to her, then, came His simple words: "Mary, be thou clean!" and her faith that He could cleanse her completed her marvelous conversion. Abhorrent to her now were the selfish passions in which she had gloried—the wicked desires that brought about impurity—the sloth and self-indulgence in whose miry depths she had lain supine! She felt them infinitely alien and remote to her true nature as they vanished from her.

The bystanders (although they had witnessed some of the marvelous works of Jesus) could hardly believe their eyes as they saw the change taking place.

"Thinkest thou her reason hath fled?" asked one of the onlookers during the violence of the nental struggle. "See how she murmureth, and moveth about!"

"He casteth out the seven deadly Sins," Peter had replied,—Peter, who realized now that it was His Master's mission to bring not the righteous but sinners to repentance. Each one of the disciples was profoundly moved. It was—to most of them—as if the film of misunderstanding and of traditional piety had been removed from their eyes, and they for the

first time had insight of the Kingdom of Heaven that He meant through the cleansing of the contrite heart.

No one was more startled than Judas, however. He had never been able to envisage other than physical and material coming of the Kingship: it was an army with banners he looked for! He was greatly astonished to see the girl he had angered by his indifference, become a humble follower of his Master. He scowled and frowned until a new thought gradually developed: She too would be an adherent of the Kingdom—her riches and influence might hasten its coming! . . . The Judæan disciple went down to the door.

A look of ineffable sweetness, commingled with devotion to her Redeemer, had replaced the once arrogant and wicked smile on Mary's lips. And yet in another moment or two, as she continued to stand before Him, she suddenly felt humiliated and ashamed. She looked at herself in a bewildered manner. Within her was the consciousness of sins forgiven and heart cleansed of its iniquities, and yet her outer semblance was still the worldling's and the courtesan's.

Hastily she drew up her long cloak around

and past her white gleaming shoulders and then, hood-like, about her head.

The repentant girl now approached the Divine Man still more nearly. She knelt, softly and reverently kissed the hem of His robe. . . . And then He performed that simple act of benediction that blessed so many in His time and symbolizes His blessing for all ages onward, putting His hand on her head and saying:

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

CHAPTER VI

AN ANSWER TO CAVILERS

"And He spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees."

It was a new Mary who came forth. In her sweet new peace there was no thought other than to rid herself of the appanages of her worldly life and thus enter fully the spiritual service of her Redeemer. Her first act at the door was to take off her jewels and hand them, one after another, to the beggars thereabout.

A crowd rapidly collected. Paupers holding forth eager hands swarmed around her,—crying, begging, clutching feverishly at the unexpected gifts; and it was all that the Nubian and his fellow slaves could do to protect her from being swept away by the mad tumult. Presently it became evident that she had nothing more to give. The slaves made a lane to her chariot. But as she was about to step into it, Judas intervened. He had been waiting for her in the street, he felt that he had an explanation to

make. . . . She did not want to speak to him particularly, then! But he took her arm and forced her to hear:

"Mary, the reason I have left thy side to follow the Carpenter—is because He is going to be King! He will be acclaimed and seated on His throne by the people's will; then consider the wealth and honor I can bring to thee when I am His chief councillor!"

Mary listened to the words as in a daze. . . . She slipped the hold he had on her and started again to turn away. The Nubian had now upraised the tall pole or standard that one customarily grasped in order to lift oneself into the chariot. Again Judas intervened and began his pleadings anew. But Mary only shook her head and said:

"I care not for *that* Kingdom whereof thou speakest! For He is far above all principalities and powers and might and dominion and every name that is named—and He hath made me Clean!"

Adoringly she looked toward the house, toward that Master Who meant more to her than all the kingdoms and principalities of Earth. . . . And this time she firmly grasped the standard and swung into the chariot; and

as the Nubian picked up the reins and started to drive—and Mary's chariot became a receding speck down the road—a Pharisee's son who had been watching them mocked the Judæan about the rebuff Mary had given him, and angrily the disappointed Judas pushed the boy out of the courtyard. . . . In the mind of the Judæan Disciple, the seed of a tiny resentment against the Master was taking root. Not an active revolt certainly, but a feeling that in some manner the Magdalene's conversion, with her meek and lowly acknowledgment of their Leader, had not furthered his own worldly plans. . . . He frowned, and a strange look of doubt and disturbance came into his face.

The Scribe, the Pharisee, and the Captain of the Levites had waited all day to entrap the Man of Nazareth and convict Him of law-breaking.

It was an hour past the beginning of the Sabbath. The stream of petitioners seeking help or healing had ceased. All the strict sect were supposed to be observing the ceremonial ritual within their homes or at synagogue. And now there came around the corner of the house—guided by the boy Mark—the little girl whom He had healed of blindness after the dial had

pointed the hour and the roof-top Herald with his horn had announced the solemn opening of the Sabbath.

The wearied Minister was starting to leave the house of His ministrations when Simeon, followed by Annas and Malchus, brought the little child up to Him. Pointing to her opened eyes, Simeon spoke:

"Why doest thou that which is not lawful on the Sabbath Day?"

He had restored sight to the blind, made one of the least of His children supremely happy, thereby blessed all to whom she was kin or with whom she came in contact! And yet the Pharisee caviled. The Scribe felt offended. The Levite Captain stood ready to make an arrest. But the Divine Healer touched the little girl's curls lovingly as He gently said:

"Are ye angry at Me because I have made a child every whit whole on the Sabbath Day? Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil—to save life or destroy it?"

It was strange how this simple Man could confound them by His inerrant insight into the true issue!

The Scribe and the Pharisee exchanged unhappy looks. Malchus wondered whether there

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JUDAS IS FRIGHTENED BY THE HIGH PRIEST'S ANATHEMA OF JESUS AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

would be any arrest to make that day. . . . The learned men stood apart to consult. . . . Then, at Simeon's suggestion, Annas unfolded a scroll of the written Law of Moses. Showing the chapter and verse, he read therefrom the ban upon labor on God's Day.

"The Sabbath was made for man," answered Jesus, "and not man for the Sabbath!" That flash of insight for the first time revealed to humanity the Law not as a stiff iron garment to bind, but as a guide to finer living!

Yet the carpers were not satisfied. The Scribe showed other verses. Simeon, with his talent for legalism, pointed out the pains and penalties decreed against the violators of the letter.

And now it was the turn of the Man of Nazareth Himself to delve into the much treasured Book and to put apt finger on proper place, as He told them:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets—but to fulfil! Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me." . . . Under His pointing finger, in the Pentateuch scroll, lay the prophecy by Moses

of His mission, which He now read to them and invited them to see.

In every way the new Teacher, retaining ever His gentleness and humility, worsted, by proofs from the Holy Writ, these ceremonialists with their insistence on trifles, their hard-heartedness to underlings (like the little girl they had brought out as an "example"), and their indifference to righteousness, judgment and mercy—

So that the Divine Missioner of a new day and a better order of living sent them forth from Him—as His indignation, marking the anger of God, finally rose to expression—sent them forth thoroughly abashed and morally whipped for their actions to the little child.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men! For ye neither go in yourselves—neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

"Woe unto you, Hypocrites! Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness!

"Ye serpents—ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the wrath to come?"

CHAPTER VII

CAIAPHAS SETS A TRAP

"And the fame of Him went throughout all Judæa. But the Chief Priests and the Scribes sought to destroy Him. And they assembled together unto the palace of the High Priest, in Jerusalem."

Joseph Caiaphas the High Priest sat in Council.

He was large and portly and gorgeously dressed. His wonderful head-dress, rich vestments and gold-embroidered breastplate adorned with the twelve gems called the Urim and Thummim, symbolized the sacerdotal power. Around him were the Elders who acted both as Legislature and as Supreme Bench, in the celebrated Sanhedrin.

Since Moses's day the national religion had differentiated into two branches: the sacrificial, and the legalistic.

Sacrifice was the business of the Priests of the Temple. They alone could offer the gifts of the worshippers unto Jehovah. And as the High Priesthood was hereditary in a few

priestly families, and all the 20,000 sub-priests were descended from Aaron and all their helpers or Levites sprung from Levi, it followed that they became a peculiarly marked sacerdotal class, guarding jealousy their privilege and latterly their great wealth through this sole prerogative of offering up flesh food and also grains and other vegetable offerings to Israel's God.

Contrasted with them were the deep students of the Law, they who had made a study of the Torah and with it handed down from generation to generation the so-called oral tradition—corresponding to our legal decisions and precedents—which was deemed by the Pharisees, at least, to be of equal validity. Weekly they —the Rabbins and Scribes—expounded the Law in the synagogues or local congregations, the Elders thereof also dispensing the local justice.

But the representatives of legalists too sat in the Sanhedrin, together with delegates of the worldly priestly class and members of the class of Zealots or fighting Puritans. All acknowledged the headship of the High Priest. The body as a whole was the ruling tribunal of Israel save as to Imperial taxation and also

capital punishment which were reserved for the heads of the civil power.

The High Priest was removable by the Roman Procurator, the Sanhedrin had to have at least a modus vivendi with the Roman masters. Nevertheless both the president and his Court wielded great authority and anxiously saved what remained to them of the old Jewish State.

A new Messiah in Galilee! . . . A Messiah who was gathering great crowds of devoted adherents, training up followers of His teachings, coming into Judæa now and again, and imparting to its people some of the Galilean fervor for a simpler form of religion and a reform of the accepted ritual and legalistic practice of that day. . . . That was the question before the House!

The Scribe trembled for his elaborate expoundings and subtle decisions. The Priest trembled for his revenues. The Zealot impatiently saw the chance of stout Galilean and Judæan revolt slip away in the gentle turbulence of the milling masses around the Man of Nazareth. The three parties felt themselves united by the common danger, or as one of the Elders said at this convocation:

"What do we concerning this man Jesus? If we let Him thus alone—all men will believe on Him—and the Romans will come and take both our place and our nation!"

To which another answered:

"Perceive ye how we prevail nothing? Behold, while we have dallied, the world is gone after this man!"

The High Priest knitted his brow in thought. They must entrap this Nazarene before He had gone too far. Already his spies—Simeon, Annas and Malchus—had been sent forth to report the new movement. And there had been tentative orders to arrest the Man should the spies witness flagrant Law-breaking.

As the portly High Priest was stroking his beard meditatively, his agents reported to him and to the Elders. All turned with an expectant look to Simeon who came up to the desk followed by the two others.

"With our own eyes," reported the Pharisee, "we saw Him not only break the Sabbath—but He said also that God was His father, making Himself equal with God!"

A low murmur against the sacrilege spread through the assembly.

"Why did ye not arrest Him?" inquired

Caiaphas frowningly, whilst the other Elders bent forward as if asking the same pertinent question.

"We would have laid hands on Him," replied the spokesman quickly, "but we feared the multitude, for everywhere in Galilee they take Him for a *prophet!*"

The obese but quick-witted Caiaphas, who always thought more nimbly than his Sanhedrin, responded:

"In such a case thou didst well not to seize the Man." Turning to the Elders, he exclaimed: "With a double impost of taxes from Rome and our own Temple system, we must not needlessly infuriate the people. Let us not further stir their hatred against us by arresting their favorite!"

The fat old man paused . . . his eyes squinted shrewdly. His face looked cold and cruel as he bethought him of a more subtle way, which suddenly the Temple strong box, standing there, stuffed money bags and golden coins in it, suggested to him.

Expectantly the Elders craned forward again to catch the idea of Caiaphas.

He was smiling now as he took a gold coin from the box, twisting it about in his fingers.

. . . He gestured to Simeon and Malchus to approach closer and pay utmost attention. Then he held up the coin on a level with Simeon's eyes. Simeon viewed it searchingly. The face of Tiberius Cæsar was limned upon it. Caiaphas smiled craftily again. He said:

"This Man of Nazareth does not work, He goes wandering up and down the country. It is quite likely He did not pay His tax unto Cæsar; therefore, while we stay clear of it, let the Romans take Him and imprison Him!" He concluded triumphantly: "Thus shall we be rid of Him, without the hatred of the people."

The seventy grave and reverend members of the Sanhedrin nodded their approval. The sages leaned back in their chairs to enjoy the development of the High Priest's idea.

"Proceed at once to Capernaum," ordered Caiaphas to the trio. "Find the tax-collector Matthew,—who in the name of Rome shall lodge complaint against this delinquent." Then he turned to the Council, stating that this piece of business had concluded their proceedings of the day, and in token that he must take up his executive business, he picked several scrolls and lists from his desk. The Elders rose. They

bowed formally to the High Priest who as formally returned the bow. Then they filed out, chatting among themselves in small excited groups. . . .

Simeon, Annas and Malchus were soon on their way back to Galilee where they hunted up the tax-collector of Capernaum.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEA OF GALILEE

"And it came to pass afterward that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God."

The menace of rebellion or insurrection as the result of Galilean teaching may seem vague and shadowy to our thinking, yet in the politics of that day it was a real threat. Any Zealot might attract a following and raise the standard of a serious revolt. Scripture says that in suppressing one such revolt Pilate mingled "the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices."

The origin of Jesus of Nazareth was in the the class of skilled artisans. He was descended in the fourteenth generation from King David, the glorious Anointed One of the brightest era of Jewish History. His father was a carpenter, so He took up the father's trade after him; His Mother was a beautiful, spiritual girl, known in after times through the account in

two of the Gospels and the doctrine of the Holy Church as the Virgin Mary or Madonna.

Beyond the precocity of holding His own in learned discourse with the Doctors of the Temple at the age of 12, He was not unlike other gentle, hard-working sons of carpenters until His thirtieth year.

The preaching of John the Baptist, that wonderful eremite, brought forth Jesus. The Baptist proclaimed the Man of Nazareth, his successor and as One greater than himself,—the latchet of Whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose. . . . The noble Messenger of the Lord suffered imprisonment and finally death at the hands of the ruling power.

Seeking the desert to fast and pray, Jesus returned to Galilee to heal and teach.

It is not to be thought that He immediately forsook the adze, plane and saw, for His ministry of loving service began in His home town of Nazareth; and after His Sabbath talks on the Kingdom of Heaven before the wondering synagogue, there remained the secular week in which manual labor alternated with His benedictions to the weak and weary and the exercise of His marvellous healing gift.

As His ministery increased and He made

visits to larger Galilean towns like Capernaum and Bethsaida and gathered about Him a nucleus of followers, the Tetrarch Herod Antipas, husband of Herodias and step-father of Salome, became worried. That guilty man, himself a professing Jew and secretly respecting John the Prophet whom he had slain, actually feared that this rise of a new Reformer was the resurrection of John! His fears found an echo in the worry of the Hierarchy in Jerusalem lest "this Jesus" should have all Galilee by the ears and start the bloody Zealot warfare all over again.

What a commentary on stupidity, ignorance and bigotry in high places! What the spiritual state of a Nation when humanity's Redeemer was so misunderstood!

. . . Because the very essence of this gentle Man's teaching was righteousness, the returning of good for evil, the doctrine of universal love and trustful confidence in the sheltering strength of the Heavenly Father. Not once did He raise the physical whip against iniquity —not once save when (as we shall see later) He made the imperative gesture that drove the thieves from His Father's house,—the Temple. . . . His religion was love, and His weapon the

pricking conscience of the individual sinner. But those blind guides knew it not. . . .

There is something idyllic and beautiful in the relations of this Carpenter of Nazareth and the men He chose as His Disciples. All of them were work people: Judas the only man of means and he the son of a merchant tanner. Several of them were fishermen. By their nets at the Sea, riding with them in their fishing boats on its broad expanse, or seated on a green-carpeted Mount or knoll overlooking it, Jesus expounded the world's true philosophy, —the religion of common brotherhood under the Fatherhood of God. Ritual, legalism, sacerdotalism, ranks and hierarchies gradually fell away under the glorious expanse of His vast idea until the elaboration of Moses's ten great commandments and almost innumerable lesser ones was condensed into His "Love God" and "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself."

The work of Jesus in the first part of His public career is known as the great Galilean ministry. His home town of Nazareth was hard of heart. The Pharisaical element in the Nazareth synagogue opposed Him; the mass of the people under their leaders jeered the home Prophet, as it is the nature of jealous and small-

minded people to jeer those whom they have known in lesser state and cannot believe to be high above them!

Jesus had taken wide Galilee for His parish. Nearly all the port towns of the Sea of Galilee were stirred by His message and its afflicted were eager for His ministry.

There were none of the modern concomitants of such a campaign, for Jesus and His disciples trusted to Providence for their bodily needs. On the longer journeys two of the men went forth ahead, often found meat and lodging; where no hospitality had been extended, the Band slept out in the open and perhaps went hungry. . . . Some of them could not get accustomed to this plan of existing like the birds of the air, almost without forethought. . . . On one occasion two of them asked for fire and brimstone to be commanded down from Heaven on surly people that denied hospitality to the Holy One. But Jesus rebuked them.

One day they came to the house of an elderly, patriarchal carpenter and his aged wife who were greatly troubled by a demon that had taken possession of their child. The followers of the Man of Nazareth had been authorized to perform healing miracles in His name, but

the men lacked the power to cure the boy. The venerable host and his spouse were sadly disappointed. They had been waiting for the Band in anxious expectation that the child could be rid of the affliction. The o'er-worldly Judas had vainly attempted the healing. The old carpenter begged Peter to seek the Master, and Peter hastened out and sought Jesus who was now slowly approaching in the van of His disciples along a pathway from the Sea.

The scene was an exquisite one: the white-robed, serenely majestic Man of Nazareth coming up the path with the hills of Galilee and a cup-like arm of the sea behind Him, framing his figure; the picturesquely clad disciples in their varying colorful garbs, following in groups of two and three, earnestly conversing; the wide porch of the house gently shaded by olive and pepper trees; the beseeching white-bearded carpenter and his stout homely spouse; the questing Peter; Judas taken aback —and, the only blot on the landscape, the poor demoniac boy.

The sorrow of the old couple was pitiful. It was expressed in the old man's pathetic prayer: "Lord, have mercy on my son!"

The Master looked at the worldly disciple

Judas with grave rebuke. Then He laid a gentle hand on the father's shoulder and said with sweetness:

"If thou canst believe, the child shall be healed!"

The father and the mother leaned forward, drinking in the glad words. Jesus said: "All things are possible to him that believeth!" A ray of that complete understanding that emanated from the Divine Healer, touched the sorrowful heart. The old man bent his head, completely submissive to the Divine Will. As he raised it again and looked up at Jesus, he replied:

"Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief!"

With His hand Jesus invited the stricken boy to approach Him. He moved His hand slowly over the boy's head. The crazed look slowly changed to one of intelligence. The boy turned to his father who took him in his arms.

Tears were coursing down the father's cheeks,—that father whose act of faith had conjoined with the power of the Master in the miracle of exorcism,—and the mother was crying softly too, tears of sorrow turned into joy. . . . The disciples all gathered around the

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"EAT THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

group in loving sympathy, even little John Mark, the boy whom Jesus had healed of lameness, who came up and put one arm around the cured child's shoulder. . . . All, that is to say, except Judas who stood somewhat apart, not sharing in the solemn and yet joyous moment.

As the Man of Nazareth passed into the carpenter shop beside the door of which Judas was leaning, He looked before Him but did not speak.

CHAPTER IX

NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN

"Are ye also deceived by this Man?"
"Never man spake like Him, and He doeth many miracles!"

MATTHEW the publican, a native of the country, collected the Roman imposts and taxes at Capernaum. He was short, stout and vigorous, noted for keenness in accounts, humorous withal, and endowed with average moral sense.

There were many people of that day and community who hated Matthew, but it was the hatred to the tax-gatherer and not to an individual.

These tax-gatherers (it should be explained) did not work directly for Rome. They were the agents for the Roman *publicani* or tax-farming companies which agreed to pay the Emperor so much for the gross provincial revenue, collected all they could extort, and put everything over and above the fixed sum and the cost of collection into their own pockets.

Thus Matthew was obliged to extort his own wage out of the people, as well as the income to Rome and the profits of his masters. That is why all publicans were hated. They were Jews who, in a sense, had gone over to Rome and taken the part of their foreign employers against their countrymen. . . . Still, it was convenient to know him and to deal with him now and again, as on this present occasion when the servants of Caiaphas desired to make a case against Jesus.

Simeon the Pharisee had talked to Matthew, and found him receptive to the scheme of going out in the country a little way to extract the payment from a tax dodger. In such business Matthew could always invoke the aid of the soldiery. At Simeon's suggestion he took as his guard five or six legionaries supplied by the local Centurion, as the Pharisee had represented that they might be needed.

The publican and the Pharisee were conveyed in a chariot driven by a hired charioteer while the squad of soldiery brought up the rear. A blast of the Roman trumpet heralded the arrival of the cavalcade which came clattering up the roadway and stopped in front of the old carpenter's house.

James was the first to see it and hurried forward. He was followed quickly by Peter, the spokesman of the Disciples, and to him the authorities addressed the question:

"Doth not this Jesus of Nazareth, your Master, pay tribute?"

"Yes," replied Peter.

"Then pay it now!" was the stern command.

For an instant or so, Peter did not know what to do, for his Master had sought a spell of solitude in the carpentry room, and he did not wish to disturb Him.

But the menace of this heralded visit of armed force and Imperial tax authority, impelled him to go inside. There the Man of Nazareth, finding welcome exercise for unused muscles, was engaged in planing a tall timber. As He worked, He was smiling and completely at ease.

"Master," cried the Fisherman, "Simeon hath brought soldiers with the tax-gatherer to demand thy poll tax!"

"Why not pay it then?" was the calm answer unshadowed by worry, as Jesus continued the use of the plane.

Peter summoned Judas within. He asked the disciple of Kerioth to get the coin required

out of the black bag that Judas carried—their common treasury. But Judas showed him that the bag was empty. Not a coin of any kind, even of copper, remained. "If ye had taken my counsel, healing the rich instead of the poor," complained Judas morosely, "we should have had money to pay!" Both the followers were much perturbed.

The Man at the plane looked up from His work. He gently addressed the Fisherman Disciple:

"Go thou to the sea and cast a hook—and take up the fish which first cometh up!"

Puzzled and wondering, Peter sought explanation. But there was none given; simply the order repeated anew. Entirely uncomprehending but loyal to do the mysterious bidding, the big man turned and emerged from the workshop to the group without, where Matthew was again demanding the payment of the money. Peter brushed past him. He walked rapidly down the incline of the path that led to the water.

Simeon the Pharisee, standing a little at one side, was now smiling sarcastically at the troubled looks of the Band and the hurried exit of Peter. With the soldiers at the back of

Matthew and the money not forthcoming, he could see but one outcome: the arrest of Jesus. Matthew, however, hesitated. He wanted the payment (if cash there was), and he deemed there might be a possibility that Peter had been sent after it. At his order two of the legionaries followed Peter down the path.

The Disciple climbed into a beached boat, finding fishing tackle there. He baited a hook and threw out the line. The two soldiers stood watching him closely. And John Mark came running around the corner and joined the group, as the boy realized that something interesting was about to happen.

Peter felt a nibble which had been caused, however, by some sea creature eating off the bait. He baited his hook anew and threw it a second time. TUG! Came a real bite. . . . The cautious Fisherman waited until he could feel the line pulling out of his hand. Then, grasping it more firmly, he pulled it in with powerful strokes, landing a goodly sized fish. He held it up, still wriggling in his hands.

The soldiers grinned derisively as they saw the great Fisherman looking in the mouth of the fish. Of a sudden their expressions changed to blank amazement. . . . Peter had

removed the hook, and was taking a coin out of the mouth of the fish!

Their astonishment was hardly less than the Disciple's own. For a moment he raised his head in silent thanks to Heaven, turning his face then in worshipful adoration to the Man in the carpenter shop. In another moment or two the coin was secure in his hand, the fish was dropped, and he was running up the pathway to present the tax money.

Everyone crowded around Peter to see the extraordinary thing that had happened. Only Simeon stood one side, scorning what he regarded as trickery. After Peter in triumph had shown the find, he handed it to the publican.

That stocky, practical man of affairs reluctantly withdrew his fascinated gaze at the Nazareth Carpenter planing in the shop, as Peter broke the reverie and offered him the coin. He was too astounded for words, could only mechanically make the record of the payment by his stylus on the waxed tablets, at the same time passing the coin amongst them for verification. . . . Plainly Matthew was exceedingly agitated. . . . By no means could he understand what manner of Man was this who

bade money appear out of the fish of the deep, and it appeared! . . . The publican put his hands to his breast.

But the hard-hearted Pharisee believed no miracle of the Man of Nazareth worthy of credence. Provoked by the failure of the plot to make the arrest, he thought he saw another way to entrap the One he would destroy. . . . He entered the shop just as the coin had been handed to Jesus. Without a word of question or surprise at Simeon's uninvited presence at that time or place, the Master in turn placed the coin in Simeon's hand.

The Pharisee's gaze wandered towards the horizon. He was mentally preparing his riddle, which he wished to propound with an air of casualness. He accepted the coin at last and addressed Jesus:

"Thy followers say that thou art going to break the yoke of Rome. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

Jesus viewed Simeon sternly. He knew well the purport of the question. If the Man of Galilee refused to pay the coin to Matthew, He foresaw His instant arrest as a rebel against Rome. If on the other hand He paid the tax,

He knew that Zealot Jews would cry out against Him as violating His religion by paying tribute to the hated heathen usurper. "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?" said Jesus; then, pointing to the coin, he put the counter question to Simeon:

"Whose is this image and superscription?"

"It is Cæsar's," answered the Pharisee.

"Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's."

The truth and moral nobility of the reply, together with the implicit rebuke of the conduct of the questioner, completely silenced the representative of the priestly party.

It left the inquisitor nothing to do! The payment had been made. Jesus had declared himself equally the subject of the temporal power and of God. The Pharisee retired discomfited, presently the legionaries departed also—but Matthew stayed!

For the publican was now gazing at the Great Teacher as One who transcends the level of poor, erring humanity. The power of the Divine had been revealed by the miracle. Nay, more than that, was the essential divinity of His justice: the thought that a man could be

a good Jew and yet a good subject of Rome—a loving-kindness that seemed to be drawing the publican irresistibly to Him, and that seemed to banish forever the scorn and contempt towards Matthew for his necessary office of tax collector.

Might it not be that in His service lay real happiness? Matthew felt so, with dimmed, moist eyes, and a strange flutter in his hitherto worldly heart; and as he slowly turned—not knowing what to do and thinking that he must after all follow the others and go away—the Master laid hands softly on the publican's shoulder. Coinciding with that touch, came the deep and solemn call:

"Matthew, follow thou Me!"

Matthew stopped abruptly, he faced the most Wonderful of all men. . . . His hands groped forward, seeking Jesus . . . Never again would he sit at the receipt of custom, never again be the creature of a Tyranny and the reviled of his fellow religionists; for he had found the Divine Being to set him morally and physically free.

The little company of the followers of Jesus welcomed the accession of Matthew. The twelfth disciple, he set himself the task of writ-

ing the life of his Master. And the boy John Mark became his constant companion, for there was a deep affinity and sympathy between the veteran diarist of the ministry of Jesus and the boy who hoped some day to tell the good news also. . . .

Let us look into the carpenter shop where the cloth that concealed the upper part of the long timber had fallen away, revealing a Cross. . . . Jesus was gazing at it intently. . . . He did not move as Judas entered silently and waited standing slightly back of Him, with his face quite close to Jesus's cheek. . . . A close observer of the quiet scene might have noted in it somewhat of the ominous and darkling, for it seemed almost a prefigurement of things yet hidden in the future.

The Judæan, bowing low, kissed the fold of the Lord's garment. "Didst thou call, Master?" he asked.

"I did not call!" replied Jesus gently.

. . . . . .

"Why have ye not brought Him? Are ye also deceived?"

Thus was heard the voice of Caiaphas, in the priestly palace at Jerusalem two days later,

angrily reproaching Simeon because of the failure of his mission.

In irate majesty the obese High Priest sat on his throne, holding the Law. Pounding on the table with his fat fist, he interrupted the long story of the other. The Pharisee was obliged to cut it short, entering only this plea in his own defence:

"Never man spake like this Man! What do we? For this Man doeth many miracles."

The High Priest was too enraged to answer. He walked quickly away, and left Simeon standing there watching him!

CHAPTER X

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me!"

Jesus now sought the wider ministry of Judæa, the capital province of the Jewish state, and pleasant were the byways that led through sunlit orchards to the hillside villages where He taught and preached. It was the season of olive picking. Never was Nature more fair and beautiful. The children came trooping forth to pick the well laden trees, and while the older ones worked at careful grading and sorting of the fruit, the seasonal event was in the nature of a delightful frolic to the smaller boys and girls, even mere infants taking some part in it.

Laughing and shouting with glee as they climbed to the best locations, they threw down the ripe black ovals helter-skelter, as often missing the capacious olive basket as hitting it! On the ground below and a little to one side, sat two tiny tots by a smaller basket, play-

ing at the sorting game and gravely accepting or rejecting—olive by olive.

The intent face of Jesus relaxed as He saw them. He smiled at the babes and gently teased the youngsters above. The Disciples and little Mark joined in the innocent fun, only Judas (who was in an argumentative mood) standing aloof. It was a pretty sight when Jesus and His followers rescued the more daring little ones who had ventured too far to the ends of limbs,—reaching up into the foliage and taking them down from their perches.

Instinctively all the children ran towards Jesus as soon as they got to the ground.

"Annoy not the Master!" Judas was saying firmly, trying to send them away. "Now about the temporal kingship that Esaias prophesied —" he resumed the thread of his discussion with the Leader.

"We will say no more of the kingship!" smiled the Saviour, bidding Judas cease his obstruction. He extended open arms to the children, they came flocking to Him; and as He sat, some climbed to His knees and nestled in His arms, others proudly held to view their baskets of olives; all chattered to Him excitedly of the events of the day, and one mite of a girl

—in a supreme burst of confidence—gave Him her broken dolly to mend!

That kindly face, that gentle white-robed figure, ever won simplicity and innocence to its cause. He loved them, and they loved Him!

"Suffer little children to come unto Me!" said Jesus to the assembled Disciples. "—and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!"

. . . . . .

He was to sojourn that evening at Bethany, a village about two miles from Jerusalem,—— the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, His intimate friends.

Reports had reached the Band en route of the grave illness of Lazarus, but Jesus had not changed their itinerary. He had still much preaching to do—He could not forsake His Mission even for His friend! And now that the round of Ministry was over—and these little Ones of the olive grove gladdened by His pass ing through—Jesus rose, and saw the sisters of Lazarus approaching from the direction of the village. He pointed out the far descried figures to the men about Him, even as the children scattered to play. . . .

There was something sombre and mournful

in their approach, by no means the tripping gait of the erstwhile hostesses of Bethany! They were clad in black, and their young unseamed beautiful faces were haggard with sorrow.

Martha knelt at the Leader's feet, her sister standing closely behind her. There was almost the accent of reproach in Martha's fateful words:

"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother Lazarus had not died—"

The tragic news startled the lookers on . . . Why indeed had not Jesus hurried to the sickbed?

"—But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, he will give it Thee!"

Again the words were Martha's. She had risen to her feet, and with her arm around her sobbing sister, voiced this confidence in the Galilean's power.

"Thy brother shall rise again!"

"I know that he shall rise again in resurrection at the Last Day!"

"I am the Resurrection and the Life," replied Jesus solemnly. "He that believeth in Me—though he were dead—yet shall he *live!*" Not an audible breath broke the utter stillness

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"WHY WAS NOT THIS OINTMENT SOLD FOR THREE HUNDRED PENCE AND GIVEN TO THE POOR?"

of the air . . . The Disciples, equally with the poor mourners, hung upon the words,—all save Judas, whose face was a blank!

"Believest thou this?" concluded Jesus gently.

"Yea, Lord," said the utter trust of Martha, "I believe that thou art the Anointed One—the Messiah—the Son of God!"

The face of Jesus was serene, and His gesture bade them lead the way. Never man spake like this Man. Never other Comforter brought such balm, even unto and past the Gates of death!

Lazarus lay in a cavernous tomb within a great stone coffin, covered like a sarcophagus. He had been buried four days. The way into the cave led down a dozen stone steps, and inside 'twas murky and almost black until a hand lamp or two gave it a ghostly glimmer. The sisters went first, followed by Jesus.

Martha brokenly pointed out the resting place of Lazarus. She was at the Saviour's left, and before Him. Mary walked slightly behind, and at His right. . . . The Disciples, who had been peering down the mouth of the cave, slowly descended. . . . John and James and Thomas were behind Mary. . . . Matthew

and Simon sought the obscurity of the opposite wall. . . .

The latter two took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

Jesus stood in an attitude of prayer, with His hands folded on His breast. Mary and Martha's hands were as if clutching their throats, the stricken girls were dry-eyed and past the stage of weeping; they stared with intense gaze at the slow upraising of the lid.

"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard Me!" cried Jesus. He had raised His hands and His countenance towards Heaven, and on His face shone a strange radiance.

"And I know that Thou hearest Me always!" Scarcely were the words uttered when the swathed and ceremented supine figure was revealed by Matthew and Simon rolling away the top slab. . . . The sisters could not forebear a cry. . . . They looked in affright to Jesus, and then back to the bounden figure.

"Lazarus, come forth!"

What was that? . . . Back on the wall, an aura or presence of light; indicative not of Death but of Life! The watchers shuddered. And, then, incredible—

An arm was slowly lifting within the cere-

ments! Mary shrieked, and covered her eyes, even the believing Martha hid her face till she sought strength from the majestic mien above her own, and gathered courage to extend hands in pathetic plea to the slowly rising Entombed One!

The figure of Lazarus, completely swathed, bound and helpless, sat up in its sarcophagus.

"Loose him, and let him go!"

There was a look of terror in the faces of the nearest Disciples. . . . The bystanders, coming down the steps, were getting the word, and as they approached, shuddering at the sight. . . . A head Pharisee, who was amongst them and sneering that nothing would happen, turned at the sight and ran.

The terror of the others gradually changed to exaltation and joy. . . . A wonderful halo shone around the face and head of the Saviour. . . . But the command of Jesus affrighted Martha anew; she drew back with terror-stricken hands, and wondered if she—with all her faith—*dared* obey His behest!

She unwillingly, as one asked to touch a ghost, crept closer and knelt at the head of the sepulchre. She managed to touch the cerements, which were warm from the body within!

Martha unwound the swathing from around the neck and head of the figure, roll by roll, until the body showed!

Now Lazarus raised his freed arm to his head. He drew off the bandage that yet swathed his face and eyes. He sat staring-eyed for a space, apparently unaware of his identity; then looked slowly around, wondering what in the world he was doing in these swathe clothes. . . .

It was Martha that brought him to recollection of his new found world,—Martha, who looked into his eyes, overjoyed, and then clasped him in her arms, whilst Mary his other beloved sister nestled at his side.

The happy smile of the reunited trio turned toward Jesus; with it, commingled deepest gratitude and reverence. John and Thomas and little Mark and Matthew with upraised hands and all the rest paid Him the tribute of their love. Lazarus had risen now. Martha, triumphant and happy, had come over and kneeling, was kissing the hem of His garment. Mary, too, was looking at Him in adoration.

Jesus and His beloved friend of Bethany clasped hands. . . .

CHAPTER XI

THE REFORMER IN THE FANE

"It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The Temple marked the unity of the Jewish faith.

Though primitive Israel had worshipped at many altars, here in Jerusalem was legally centred the sacrificial worship of Jehovah in the Temple, to which Jews from all parts of the world looked as the highest emblem of their religion and its Holy of Holies as the abode of God Himself.

Solomon had built the first Temple. It had been swept away through Babylonian invasion and Israelitish captivity but had been rebuilt by the returning captives; and within the last fifty years that much execrated semi-Jewish monarch Herod (falsely called the Great) had achieved at least one noble deed in its magnificent restoration and practical reconstruction, and now this was the era of the Second

Temple. . . . As yet religion had not by *force majeure* limited itself to the synagogue and the home. The Temple was standing. . . . Thither every Jew at certain seasons of the year went up to offer sacrifice, prayer and praise.

Magnificent it shone, gleaming white and gold, on a high hill of Jerusalem; a succession of courts for assembly and worship; around them, meeting halls for the Sanhedrin, Priests' tiring rooms, store houses for granary, tithing, and even the valuables of the people. Worshipping place, exchequer, parliament, judicial court, it was the centre of the national life.

Jesus had attacked the literalism of religion in the synagogues, and the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees throughout Galilee and Judæa. Ever forbidding violence against these blind guides, He had shown the people a nobler way of religion and a more spiritual belief. He loved the Temple—felt none of our modern sense of incongruity about offering physical burnt sacrifice to an incorporeal God though His Divine insight revealed that a contrite heart is better than burnt offering and a loving spirit than priestly ritual.

The symbolic act of sacrifice was beautiful to Jesus. And yet what strange sights met His

eyes on His visits to the Temple when He undertook to participate with His fellow countrymen in the Heavenly Father's worship!

A stockyard, a bourse and a market place in or adjoining the outer courts; another money exchange and market of doves in the Court of the Women; a greedy priesthood in the Court of Priests; at the apex of the structure, a venal and worldly High Priest concerned chiefly with his rich perquisites and sale of privileges.

It was not merely the incumbency of a bad priest, but the whole system and business of Temple traffic, that was responsible for this. Little by little, the evils had developed, among them being the cheating of the people in money exchange, getting extortionate prices for the animals sold there, and supporting a numerous more-or-less idle priesthood and Levitical class out of the blood and sweat of Jewry.

Jesus felt that at whatever cost to Himself, the thieving and cheating in and about the Temple must be sternly exposed and routed! It was intolerable to Him, the Son of the Father worshipped there, that such practices should go on. He had imparted to the Disciples his scorn of such baseness, and they joined with Him in the mission to the Temple. With

some it was commingled with a strain of hope of the Messianic temporal kingdom, with others it was more spiritual and mystical, with Jesus Himself it was a sacred charge to open the reign of love and truth and to stop iniquity.

Let us follow them into the Temple. . . .

Here was now taking place an incident illustrative of the two kinds of worship; the worship by the flaunting self-righteous, and the worship of the humble.

A sad, careworn old widow approached the alms box. She was accompanied by a little child, and was slowly untying knots in a grimy handkerchief.

Across her way came a rich and gorgeously appareled Pharisee. Heavy long fringes characterized the garments of the ritualist. The prayer-bands or phylacteries on his arms and forehead had been placed there to protect him from the evil influence of demons. Before the Pharisee paraded a heralding servant with a trumpet horn, used to tell all and sundry of the aristocrat's benefactions. . . .

The poor widow was pushed out of the way by all this grandeur. She took her stand timidly behind a convenient pillar. The herald

blew a long blast. The Pharisee with magnificent gesture dropped a large donation in the alms box. . . . Jesus looked at His Disciples. He had viewed the rich man with scorn, and the poor woman with pity and love. And He said to His Disciples those words that have characterized the spirit of true charity in every age and clime:

"When thou doest alms—let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly!"

. . . The Pharisee was gone. He had attracted great admiring attention from the bystanders by his munificence. Then came the poor litle widow. Long bony fingers, tremblingly taking a coin out of the kerchief, and as tremblingly depositing it in the slot. The poor woman hesitated, the child looked up at her. Her piety overcame her hesitation, again she delved in the cloth and brought out the remaining small coin which she put in the box, and with a bright and cheerful look walked away. Her eye caught that of Jesus. "Peace be with you!" He smiled and said. Her tired face looked a little less tired as her eyes met the benediction in His.

Two mites, making one farthing! "Verily I say unto you," said the Man of Nazareth softly, "that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance—but she of her want, did cast in all her living!"

As the Galilean Band walked through the Court of Women, the men noted a commotion at the farther end of the hall and presently Jesus could see that master agent of the High Priest, Simeon, approaching them.

Simeon's manner was subtle, even deferential. He was no longer the stern enforcer of the tax edicts of Rome, neither the meticulous upholder of the outer sanctity of the Sabbath. He had the air of a man seeking guidance from an eminent rabbi, and they all felt that the new question—whatever it was—had been set with uncommon subtlety and skill.

For Simeon was pointing back to a crouched figure against a pillar with soldiers on either side of her and Malchus the Captain of the guard. Around the open space in front of her, held back with difficulty by the police, were a crowd of fiendish-faced men and women bearing rocks of various sizes in their hands.

Simeon's voice was silken and flattering as

he said: "Master, this woman hath been taken in adultery. In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such. What then sayest thou of her?"

The plot behind this difficult problem to the Nazarene—this terrible question of life and death so urgently presented—was so diabolical that it warrants a word of prelude. It sprang from the sudden inspiration of Caiaphas when Malchus brought the guilty woman before him. The handing over of the woman to be stoned by the multitude, was the customary procedure. But Caiaphas saw in Simeon—the man who had failed before and the man who so eagerly wanted to bring about the downfall of Jesus —the ready instrument of a new idea, and one that this time should not fail!

"We will stone this woman in front of Jesus," said the High Priest with a leer. "But thou shalt tell Him first, that she has been taken in adultery—for which the Law says she must be stoned—and hear ye what He says!"

Caiaphas rubbed his pudgy hands with glee. The men did not fully understand his purport. To make them understand he unrolled the proper scroll of the Law and unfolded ordinance and verse:

"The Law of Moses orders the woman to be

stoned! If Jesus condemns her not He breaks the Law of Moses, and we can seize Him! If He says to kill her, the people will turn against Him—because He preaches peace!"

Jesus did not answer Simeon. He stooped down and wrote with his finger in the sand, as though he heard not the question.

The woman gasped and screamed as she looked toward those who would torture and slay her, then hid her head towards the pillar with her arm over her face. The rocks were poised to throw. The expression of cruel, murderous hate on many of the faces was revolting. A group of Simeon and his friends edged closer to the silently writing Figure. So far as they could see, the marks that He made were meaningless. They renewed the question that Simeon had put, repeating it in louder tones and time and time again so that He must answer.

"What then sayest thou of her?"

The Man of Nazareth started to rise. "Back!" cried Simeon. "Let us hear what He has to say!" The hands holding the murderous rocks were lowered somewhat as the crowd strained to hear.

Jesus rose to His full height, looking at those hard faces, and said, "He that is without sin among you, let *him* first case a stone at her!" Then He stooped down again, resuming His writing on the ground.

The stings of guilty conscience pricked each and all of them. In the presence of that Divine moral authority, they became abashed and ashamed. One after the other—from the eldest down to the last—they dropped their stones and silently slank away, leaving Jesus still marking in the sand and the offender still crouched against the foot of the pillar.

Jesus rose and stood in front of her. The fountains of her tears yet left traces on her features the comeliness of which had been ravaged and distorted by the stark horror: she no longer raised averted hands against it; and there was a tiny gleam of hope in her heart.

"Woman," He said, "where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"

She looked up slowly, dazed, unable at first to comprehend the purport of his inquiry, then seeing the empty room, and understanding. As in a flash, the sin she had committed and the doom she had escaped, came vividly back to her as she looked at the pure and sinless One. "No

man, Lord!" she cried brokenly, burying her face in her arms.

Jesus waited to speak until she could control her sobs and struggle to her feet, at last daring to gaze into His eyes which spoke only forgiveness and compassion. In that blessed look, and the solemn words that accompanied it, she found the hope of eternal life. . . .

"Neither do I condemn thee," said Jesus, softly. "Go and sin no more!"

CHAPTER XII

AMONG THE MONEY CHANGERS

"And [He] found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. . . ."

The Levites were pulling the sacrificial animals to the floor, putting the heads in floor rings or staples, and some of them were sharpening already keen knives!

Against the Portico wall were hung the slain carcasses. . . . Priests officiated at the gory High Altar, whilst the Levites proceeded to slaughter more bullocks and more rams at the behest of the increasing stream of the offerers of animal Sacrifice.

High up to the terrace of the Holy Place other priests were bringing the procession of the Shew Bread, the twelve loaves of which had to be replaced each Sabbath. . . . Beyond this sanctuary of sacred loaves, golden candlestick and vaporous incense, was a huge arch and the Veil of the Holy of Holies.

Jesus and his followers had climbed the many steps of the wonderful system of terraced courts and approaches, and stood looking down the full length of the stairway.

Below, in the Court of Priests, went on the killings and the sacrifices; the Courts of the men and women, further down, were a bustling scene of persons active at their devotions, inextricably confused with the live stock and vegetable products they were offering to the priests, their intercessors; while, in the farthest and lowest vista, could be descried the fore Court of the Gentiles which was in fact "a market, a money-changers' bureau, a place for public discussion, and a general meeting point for Jews from all parts of the world. . . ."

The face of the Leader of the Galilean Band was grave as he descended the stairway. He denounced the trafficking to his companions, and the remark was overheard by a hawk-like, black-bearded priest who hotly rejoined: "How darest thou question the sacred rites commanded by Moses?"

"God is a spirit," Jesus replied, "they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth!" at the same time pointing to the man's heart, and at this gesture of the

stranger Rabbi from Galilee, the man became ashamed. . . .

"To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and to love thy neighbor as thyself," continued Jesus gravely to his disciples, "is much more than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices!"

. . . They were now down among the bird-sellers who sold the Temple doves to such as could not afford to offer up the larger animals.

A woman was descending the steps to buy, as Jesus stood slightly above her.

After the man had made the sale, the dove flew off, and the unhappy woman had no redress, the thievish bird-seller merely mocking her discomfiture.

The brow of Jesus was heavy. His usually kindly mouth was set in a firm, tight line. Hidden fires were smouldering in His eyes as if about to blaze. His hands were tying knots in some small cords that He was carrying. . . .

At the top-most table, a pigeon-dealer was cheating another woman. She pointed vainly to the insufficient change, asking for what was due. He told her, roughly, that he would not hand her another farthing!

And here closer by was a banker with the

centre of his table heaped with great piles of coins, and an abacus or counting-box to help him number them. A girl approached and asked him to change a coin of Galilee for money of the Temple, which alone was acceptable to the purveyors of sacrifices there.

The money-changer seized her coin rapaciously. In exchange he threw her two or three brass Temple pieces. The young woman—by dress and looks, one of the poorer class—was astounded.

"Dost thou know," she cried, "that thou art not giving me even half the worth of my Herod money?" On his refusal to add more, she essayed to take what was due her off one of the piles—

The angry dealer violently pushed her off. He covered the piles on the tables with his great paws, and called after her: "Thou fool! Dost thou expect me to change thy Galilean money into coin of the realm for NOTHING?"

. . . The eyes of Jesus, who was approaching with the knotted scourge held tightly in his grip, seemed boring into the man. The usurer looked up . . . he was suddenly affrighted! As Jesus came nearer and nearer, his panic increased, and as he tried to avoid the menace of

the terrible eyes and the uplifted hand with the scourge, he leaned backward and fell, upsetting his table!

The heaped-up money slid to the floor with a loud ringing clatter. Some of it swept down the steps in a golden cascade. Others of the coins rolled throughout the Bourse . . . The impact of the falling man and table down the steps, upset the adjoining closely wedged tables, and sent them hurtling downwards! In a few moments, all was confusion.

Vendors, as they fell or were hurled downward, clutched at their vanishing treasure. . . . The rolling coins attracted the crowd. Down they went on their hands and knees, pursuing the golden discs, fighting, shoving and shouting. . . . Vainly the Levites of the Temple strove to stop the turmoil. As several other tables in the path of the scrambling people went over with a crash and more money went rolling away, the fighting and struggling dealers and populace were forced among the sellers of doves, upsetting the cages and breaking the doors which had confined the feathered inmates. . . .

He had not lifted a hand nor physically scourged with His whip. Only in His eyes and

mien and words was the force of His terrible rebuke:

"It is written, My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves!"

The majestic mien of the Man as he came slowly down the steps, one step at a time, awed even those servants of Greed, so that His sternly voiced and gestured command, *"Take these things hence ye workers of iniquity!"* caused those of the crowd directly in His path to gather up their gear and flee!

Hundreds of doves were now in flight from the gates that had been burst open. Diagonally across the chaos came a galloping procession of goats, set free when a group of money-changers pursued into the goat pen a beggar who had borne off several of their money bags. More cages were upset, more sellers sent headlong, fights broke out twixt money-changers and the dove-sellers among whom they had been hurtled; but ever, as Jesus descended, the crowd broke and fled at His approach. . . .

As the mob tore past, the keepers of the cattle pens asked excitedly the cause of the commotion. Several of the fleeing mob stopped long enough to point out the white-robed Figure

above. The keepers forgot their jobs and ran to see. . . . The Temple cattle began milling. . . . Two or three of the fat red beeves saw the pen doors open and dashed through.

The others followed the leaders. More and more cattle milled out through the open doors. The charge stampeded the herd which now in terror reversed direction and swept straight across the Gentiles' Court.

"The bullocks! The bullocks!" cried alarmed voices. "We shall be crushed under their hooves!"

Far up next the Holy Place, Simeon saw and heard the upswelling clamor from far below. Angered, he gave the hurried order that Malchus seek and find the High Priest. Even as he spoke, people were pouring up the higher stairway to escape the bulls. Women ran past, holding out beseeching hands. Other persons, half mad with fright, sought to climb the very pillars of the colonnades and find perches on the capitals. Two priests, examining a sacrificial ram they had brought out of the sheepfold for slaughter, were so astonished by the tumult that they ran toward the centre of the commotion, leaving the doors of the fold wide open.

The sheep escaped. . . . They clattered

down the steps alongside and past the Leader of the Galilean Band. . . . The freed doves fluttered about His head.

Meantime Malchus with his soldiers had hurriedly entered the presence of Caiaphas. "Master," he ejaculated, "this Galilean standeth without in the Temple—"

"Quick! What is it?"

"—he driveth out the money-changers and dove-sellers—the sacrificial animals are loose —he casteth out all those who buy and sell!"

Furiously Caiaphas struck his gong to summon the whole Temple force. Dropping the mallet, he hurriedly departed from the High Priest's house in the van of his attendants. . . .

The Temple had been cleared at last. The mart was a wreck, the sellers had gone, and Jesus stood alone—half way up the steps. . . . Only near the great Coponius Gate might have been noted the signs of a fresh commotion where an incoming crowd seemed to be battling with those departing . . . With the utmost difficulty, the Levites deployed by Malchus managed to close the great doors.

In a far vista the High Priest Caiaphas led Malchus and the soldiers up a long corridor. Halfway they were stopped by Simeon. He

pointed out the passage at the end of which the Disturber was to be seen. . . . Scribes and Pharisees joined the procession, eager to see the capture. . . . All entered the Court where Jesus was standing.

The rule of the Temple had been flouted. The offender must be arrested, and made to suffer! Quivering with rage, the High Priest planted his forefoot on the same step as the Galilean, and with accusing finger pointing back to the wreckage, addressed Him.

"By whose authority doest thou these things," cried Caiaphas, "and who gave thee this authority?"

The calm, stern reply was the same as Jesus's word to the iniquitous money-changers: "Ye have made my Father's house a den of thieves!"

The face and body of Caiaphas flinched as from a blow. . . . His profits from the Temple were notorious. The common talk said that the trafficking had enriched him enormously. . . . But to kill the force of this direct accusation, he turned the attack and gave the sneering word to Malchus:

"This man blasphemeth Jehovah by telling us that he is the Son of God. Arrest ye him, therefore!"

The attack of Caiaphas might have succeeded then and there but for a strange circumstance that was happening down at the Coponius Gate and which caused everyone to look in that direction.

For it was no ordinary outside mob that had been clamoring for admittance. Word had spread throughout the city, with almost the rapidity of the thunderbolt, that the Son of David, the real Messiah of their hopes and prophecies, was purging the Temple.

From all quarters they came, led by fervent followers of the Galilean, palm branches in their hands, joy in their hearts, smiles upon their lips!

The vanguard of them had been forced back by the issuing crowd of fleeing traffickers. . . . But now their numbers were myriad. After the guards had all been concentred for Jesus's taking, it became possible for Peter and his friends to throw open the great gates and welcome the triumphant procession with Mary Magdalene at its head!

On Mary's face was a shining radiance. The uplifted flowers and palms and Passover lilies set her face in a glorious frame. Around her were many women and children palm-laden and

flower-laden, and back of her surged thousands of men, exalted, happy, yet animated by the stern purpose to rescue their Deliverer!

For a moment or two Caiaphas looked staggered! What if this crowd should rise and sweep his High Priesthood into the dust? They must quickly take this Jesus away and martial the guards in defence! . . . He renewed the order for the arrest.

The soldiers started to obey the order. The Man of Nazareth stood there calmly, but something in His words as He pointed to Himself, stopped and awed them!

"Destroy this temple—and in three days I will raise it up?"

Were the words prophetic? Did He not indicate by His gesture the earthly shrine of His Godhead—His body—which they could easily destroy but which would rise again and reign!

However they took—or mistook—His words, a solemn hush fell o'er the martial assembly as they heard the solemn utterance of the Man from Galilee.

Caiaphas seized a lance from one of his spearmen. If the dolts would not do the job, he would arrest the Disturber himself. . . . But now came the tramp, tramp, tramp of the vast

multitude approaching nearer, and with it the upswelling cry from innumerable throats that seemed a veritable song of victorious triumph!

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed be the KING that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

. . . Caiaphas made no arrest that day.

CHAPTER XIII

HOSANNA TO THE KING!

"And His name shall be called . . . the Prince of Peace!"

A cowering, retreating High Priest, and a guard of Temple custodians that was rapidly swallowed up by the advancing throngs—

Did they not give token that the Man of Galilee was at the height of His influence? That He could pull up the corrupt hierarchical system, root and branch, and sweep it out of Judæa into the sea?

So Judas thought, and so thought a certain Rich Stranger in Jerusalem whose acquaintance we shall make a little later. But first of Judas—

The crowd was quite irresistible now. It had reached the steps immediately below the Galilean, and His followers had marshaled it almost like an army. The Magdalene led her joyful group of flower-bearers in the centre. Peter captained a detachment of little folk—and big

soldierly Galileans behind. Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary, intimate friends of Jesus, led the people of Bethany. Little Mark was waving his palm branch with joy, and the face of John the beloved Disciple was shining at the thought of the acclamation of his Master . . . All were singing their Hosanna psalm, presenting their palms and floral offerings to the Messiah.

"It is not for Myself that ye should rejoice and be exceeding glad," the face of the Acclaimed One seemed to say, "but for My Heavenly Father who sent Me."

His hands were deprecatory, outwardly extended, as the crowd came and completely surrounded Him. . . . Men and women were kneeling to Him. Some hugged His knees or kissed His garments. On the features of all was mirrored a martial devotion.

Judas had found a crown. It was a chaplet of golden leaves (in Roman fashion) that a devotee handed to him, pointing toward Jesus. The man of Kerioth elbowed his way through, and halted before the Master.

Judas was just as happy and exalted as anyone there—yet how different! In his mien there was the triumphant look of the master of state-

craft. He was upholding high the regal chaplet, and shouting to the multitude:

"He is our Messiah and Deliverer—let us crown Him King of Kings!"

"Hosanna!" replied the crowd, catching up the idea. "Hosanna in the highest—all hail the KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS!"

The deed lacked but an instant of its execution. . . . A nod—or simple silence—on the part of Jesus, would have completed it. . . . Strangely, Jesus was pushing the crown away that Judas wished to place upon His head. . . . He was peremptorily ordering Judas to put it away!

The enthralled multitude would not be denied. They were surging up so rapidly that it seemed a fatal crush or panic might result. . . . Jesus MUST wear that crown, whether or no! The Mob Spirit meant to make Him a King by force. . . .

We are told in the Holy Writ that He possessed the power of making Himself invisible. But here we are asked to accept no supernatural event. Simply—

"He departed, and passed through the midst of them."

Was it some friendly intervention of Peter,

John, James and the less worldly seeking disciples that made a backward lane? Did the friendly dusk hide Him to the confusion of His seekers? Or did another habit, quickly lent and covering His white Rabbinical robe, aid His escape? . . . We do not know.

But when the crowd looked again, Jesus had vanished. Everywhere they vainly sought Him, in and out of the Temple courts, up the long, broad stairway, through the innumerable archways and corridors. . . . Sought Him, all save Judas, who was a broken man!

. . . Gone—to Judas—the hopes of commanding the vaults and the tithings, and the produce of the Temple flocks and herds; of being his Master's Chief Minister in dealings with Rome; of occupying the rich seat of the Treasurership in new and glorious Messianic administration! And right there—in his defeat—a sudden thought smote Judas!

What if the hierarchy learned, as they inevitably would, of his proffer of the Crown and marked him out as the chief traitor in this miserably abortive revolt? . . . A shudder passed through the man of Kerioth. . . . As he was leaving the Temple by a side corridor, he came full in the view of Caiaphas and Mal-

chus. He was summoned by Caiaphas who knew well his father, the tanner of the Temple hides.

"Harken, thou *King Maker!*" hissed the aged High Priest in tones of deadly sneering menace. "Thy Master of Galilee shall pay in full for this, and thou and thy fellow knaves, likewise!"

. . . The would-be revolutionary dropped the crown and turned away, rubbing his hands on his garments as if they had been soiled by that emblem of royalty. . . . The menace of the wrath of Jewry he did not forget.

CHAPTER XIV

GALILEAN OR EMPEROR

"All this will I give to Thee—if Thou wilt be the King of Kings!"

The Rich Stranger was lean and comely, hooded and robed. He stood leaning against a pillar of the topmost colonnade. Although his costume was sable, it was richly ornamented as to breastplate and girdle, and a broad band of white went down the front of it. He was watching the white-clothed figure of a Rabbi who was somewhat nearer the coping, looking down from the roof at the doings in the Courts below.

. . . It was Jesus looking at the scene from which He had vanished! The light had gone out of His eyes. A dull ache filled His being. Alas! He was as far from the true Kingdom—the kingdom of the hearts and consciences of men—as were these mistaken enthusiasts! A word from Him—even a nod—would have made Him their temporal ruler, with at least the

A Cecil B. DeMille Production. *The King of Kings.*

JESUS DECLINES THE PLEA OF THE DISCIPLES TO ARM AGAINST THE TEMPLE HIERARCHY.

grand result of extinguishing the thieving hierarchs . . . The Stranger approached, and as to a fellow countryman in that sacred edifice, the lonely thinker exhibited no surprise.

"Why not accept the anointment of Thy worldly Messiahship?" the Stranger asked in low accents. He was pointing down with his forefinger to the searching crowds of the king-makers, with their palm branches and flowers still in their hands. The Stranger's voice was friendly; his tone almost casual, as if he suggested the most natural thing in the world.

. . . But the Rabbi bowed His head. Slowly He raised His face and arms to Heaven, and prayed. A deep struggle was going on in His breast. The prayer seemed to give Him strength and to blast the purpose of the Stranger who—as if a chill wind had smitten him—was withdrawing slowly around the pillar. . . . Still Jesus stood there, His face upraised, His eyes closed as in prayer.

Below, the Courts were gradually resuming their normal appearance. Some of the sellers and dealers were re-entering and trying to see if they might yet return to the now badly shattered routine. The Disciples of the Galilean were calling back and sorting out their scat-

tered followers, so that the marshaled throngs again—in the twilight—had almost the look of an assembled camp.

The Stranger was at the side of Jesus again, but slightly back of Him. . . . He was speaking. . . . Something or other in his persuasive speech seemed to transform the milling hosts below into a glorious Army with banners!

"And why not the KING OF KINGS?" whispered the counselor. Chariots (or so it seemed to the lonely muser) were coming down the centre betwixt ranks of spearmen and lancemen. Behind them pranced proud cavalry. The towers and temples of the Imperial City miraged the background; nearer to view were the statues of Emperors on their chargers—and it even seemed that He, the becrowned, purple arrayed Galilean, Himself, was celebrating there His world-triumph, opposite the statue of His deity.

KINGS OF KINGS, verily . . . LORD OF LORDS—"All this will I give thee—if thou wilt be the King of Kings!" urged the Stranger. . . .

The alternative:—

Treachery, imprisonment, torture and death!

And for what: merely the Ideal of a sinless,

unresisting son of God, the Life without a blemish, the redemption of a world by Love! . . .

The sinister face of the Stranger was almost grinning now. . . . If he should win, the courts and purlieus of Hell would exult to-night,—mayhap that long, lean Shape—now so featly robed and hooded—leading the dance!

. . . The Rabbi beat His breast in anguish. Tortured, He turned His eyes to Heaven, closed them, and voiced a fervent prayer. . . . The Stranger was startled, momentarily abashed. He made a firm mouth as the words died away, started to break down the resistance. . . . But the Rabbi turned to him for the first time, with the anger of God blazing in His eyes, bidding the man to go! . . . Queer, in the Stranger's defeat the armored hosts were dissolving till—when he had vanished—Jesus looked again and the panoply of War too had gone!

. . . Jesus no longer was tempted of the earthly kingdom—that spectre was forever banished! Yet what of the lonely hearts that wanted Him, the truer followers who had waited long hours in the Temple in hopes of His renewed Ministry? . . . He must go to them and succor them.

A lambkin lost from its mother ewe in the sheep stampede, was straying among the archways, bleating and unhappy. Jesus saw it as he descended the first stairway. Kneeling, He picked it up and comforted it in His arms . . .

The disciples and their followers now saw Jesus—up above, where He stood, momentarily holding the lamb in His arms. . . . "There He is!" cried little Mark excitedly, running up the steps to Him. . . . He calmly descended to the first rising from their Court. . . . The radiance of His spiritual triumph, visible in His face, stilled and awed them, and even Peter ventured not to do more than to approach in humble reverence and kiss the hem of His garment. . . . As their Lord extended His arms above them, they knelt. . . . He raised His head to Heaven in utterance of that grand communal petition which all the world has come to know and love under the beautiful name of the Lord's Prayer:

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME! THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES EVEN AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US!

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL: FOR *THINE* IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY, FOREVER! AMEN.

CHAPTER XV

WITH OINTMENT OF SPIKENARD

"Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on Me."

The House at Bethany was a delightful oasis in the Master's stony and often desert path. The brother and sisters were personal friends of Jesus, and loved to exercise the hospitality which included the Twelve Disciples and any other of His followers in its wide and generous circle. On the occasion we refer to, all of His company had been invited to share the pleasures of the board.

Let us look in on this quiet scene of peaceful preparation for the modest feast; a home loved by them all; whence trouble, care and pain had been banished, and where the beautiful teachings and benignant presence of the Master warmed their hearts. . . .

Busying His hands with some simple task like grinding the meal for the cakes—He talked to Lazarus and Mary of those eternal and spirit-

ual things that interested them most, revealing the mysterious ways of Providence and the infinite mercy and goodness of the Heavenly Father. Mary sat entranced at His side. Lazarus, seated on the floor opposite Him, was drinking in each word.

Following their Leader's example, the men of the Band aided in the household tasks,—James, Thomas and Andrew cleaning the roots and herbs, John aiding Martha with the slicing, Judas filling the wine jugs for the table, and the others finding opportunities of helping, now and again. . . . Only Peter was late, for he had been detained at Jerusalem.

The scene was indeed of quiet domestic beauty. A large room, well windowed, the door behind the bulge of the stairway; the scattered groups, conversing as they worked; the disciple Matthew, waxed tablets firmly held, teaching Mark to write; at the far corner, the huge oven and cooking pots, over which Martha hovered. . . . Once a slight cloud of domestic discord threatened the quiet serenity, but it was soon dissolved.

For Martha, distraught by much service and seeing Mary an absorbed listener to Jesus's discourse, crossed the room and voiced complaint:

"Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me!"

"Martha, Martha," replied Jesus, smiling gently at the busy hostess, "thou art careful and troubled about many things." He gave the rapt hearer of the Word—Mary—a look of understanding and affection, and continued in grave, earnest tones: "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her!"

Martha understood. Quite content with her work and no longer grudging Mary's hearing of the Word, she returned to her duties. . . . And soon, the discourse of the Master having ended, her sister came and helped her.

Matthew and little Mark had become inseparable. It was a pleasant sight to see: a grave, stocky, bearded man writing Greek in waxen furrows with his stylus, and a small boy watching him, eager to imitate! Good-naturedly the man let the boy have the stylus, and the latter laboriously completed the sentence. . . . The work was the Gospel-to-be of Matthew, the first life of Jesus. "Please teach me to write, too," cried the future Saint Mark, "so that some day I can write my remembrance of Him!"

But the self-communing of Judas had not been of the pleasantest. He busied himself with the wine jugs, near the door, a comely and handsomely arrayed but somewhat alien figure. Ever since he had failed in the attempt to crown Jesus KING OF KINGS, the Man of Kerioth had been moody, given to fits and starts of obscure violence; by his own preference, isolated from the rest of the Band. The sweet and healing discourse of the Galilean Leader touched no sympathetic chord in him, for his whole thought was:

"How is this Judæan mission going to end? If we stay and the Priests act, we shall all be destroyed, even as Caiaphas hath said. If we return to Galilee, we shall be naught but a band of homeless vagabonds!" Judas dreamed tragically of the might-have-beens: the worldly success he might have achieved in alliance with the Temple, the career he might have had if he had harkened to a woman of Magdala, since that day long agone Jesus's devoted follower—

As if in answer to his thought concerning her, the Magdalene came through the doorway. He was astonished that she did not greet him save by a brief smile of recognition, as of one be-

liever to another. But it was really not strange at all that she should pass him by, for her soul was pure flame from which emanated the light of holy purpose.

The Magdalene took from under her cloak a tall, very slender urn, giving forth an odor of precious perfume. With a look of spiritual love in her eyes, the girl approached Jesus.

She sank on the floor before Him and put His left foot on her knee. Mary now removed the Saviour's sandal and holding the vase gazed upward with loving indication of her purpose. The onlookers pressed nearer around them, many of them exclaiming at the extraordinary rite, but Jesus did not speak nor move.

The lovely girl removed the stopper from the mouth of the urn. A little at a time, she poured the precious ointment on His feet, then rubbed it very softly with the tips of her fingers.

Judas with his eyes had followed the Magdalene to the feet of Jesus. As soon as he saw what she was doing, he could contain himself no longer, and crossed the room to the group.

The beautiful deed was completed and Mary Magdalene divided two great strands of her hair and wiped the precious ointment of spike-

nard, drying the Saviour's feet. The humility of the act was touching; and far beyond its outward and material grace and beauty was its spirit of loving gratitude and adoration towards the Redeemer.

But Judas saw it not with the inner eye of the Spirit, but only with that argumentative and pragmatic self that was characteristic of the Treasurer of the Company. He raised a hand in protest and cried:

"To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence—and given to the poor?"

A murmur of dissent ran through the group at the thought of Judas marring an exquisite deed by such a diversion. For they knew Judas by this time, and most of them were aware that his chief concern was to keep the treasury well filled, for all that he talked of the giving of the value of the ointment to the poor.

On the face of Jesus was a rapt expression, a look of deepest gratitude to the lovely anointer. It was followed by a look to Heaven and then a lowering of the eyes.

"Let her alone," admonished Jesus. He went on solemnly:

"The poor ye have always with you—but Me,

ye have not always!" His voice took on a still deeper note. "She hath done what she could, and hath anointed Me aforehand for My burial!"

All were utterly startled. The Leader had not before prophesied His death. Most of them felt that the true Godhead of Jesus would be ultimately acknowledged by all the branches of the Jewish race. He would be acclaimed Lord of all. And here He was virtually saying that He must die—too well they felt they knew, through the animosity of the Hierarchs and Puritans He had offended.

Tears came to the eyes of many of the group, and all protested that such a tragedy was not to be. They would take arms indeed to see that He was not hurt! Only the Magdalene in her repentant adoration hardly seemed to realize the utter doom her Saviour had predicted for Himself. He had His hand now on Magdalene's head and was blessing her.

For Judas, the contrary! His to hurry out of the room and sit brooding in the archway. He felt that their Leader was insane. . . . Not only had He missed His opportunity to rule and to obtain all the wealth and sinecures of the Temple, but here He was admitting the

tragic end of His mission, and saying that Mary's anointing was an advance embalming for His sepulchre. Judas was deeply disturbed. He had his own life to consider—(so his selfish reasoning ran)—he must make the right-about-face and please the opposite party, if he could not succeed in this one! His thoughts were pursued still more darkly. . . . What if he had to betray his Master and his brethren to the Priests, in order to make his peace? . . . It would not be pleasant, but certainly he was not going to be stoned as a heretic!

The musings were abruptly interrupted by a frenzied giant of a man dashing up from the gateway and crying aloud to Judas:

"Tell me quick! Where is He—where is the Master?"

It was Peter. Fear and anxiety contorted his rugged features. "Inside!" gestured Judas briefly, and drawing away from Peter started down outside into the growing shadows of the garden.

The messenger burst in upon a peaceful and idyllic scene. The Master had calmed His Disciples and they and the hosts were looking upon Him most reverently whilst His hand still rested on Magdalene's head. But they all drew

back at Peter's hurried dash into the room and his terrible piece of news:

"Get thee out, Master, and depart hence; for Caiaphas hath placed a price on Thy head and will kill Thee!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE THIRTY PIECES

"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve."

This was what Peter had seen and what he had come with all haste from Jerusalem to report. It was a proclamation posted by servants of the High Priest above the central alms box, the most frequented and familiar gathering place in the Temple:

"I, Caiaphas, command if any among you know where is the man, Jesus of Nazareth, he shall show it, that we may seize him."

A foreboding of utter tragedy as the lot of his Master seized Peter. His knees trembled and his eyes were horror-stricken. He had not known of course that a plot against the life of Jesus had been maturing ever since Jesus cast out the money changers and bearded Caiaphas. The High Priest had told the Sanhedrin that the Man of Nazareth was a menace to all Jewry, and had quoted the ancient scripture

that "one man must die for the sins of the people." They had agreed with him that the break-up of the Temple modes could not be tolerated, just as Scribes and Pharisees felt that their own authority as law-givers must not be impugned. The order for the seizure of Jesus preparatory to His trial was ratified.

Luckily at Bethany He was not under the immediate eye of the Chief Priest.

After their first astonishment and alarm over the fateful news that Peter brought, the thought came to the Disciples that a way of saving Him yet lay open.

Though they well knew He would never appeal to the masses of people to start a revolt—had He not escaped almost by stealth from those who sought to make Him King?—yet there was a chance for a dozen stout and valiant men, aided by Lazarus and his friends, to convey Him out of Bethany and into Perea, a wild country on the edge of the wilderness, where in any event the guards of Caiaphas would not be able to come and take Him.

And so these rude unlettered men, none of them save Matthew a person of education and none even of the middle class of society except the recalcitrant Judas, sprang to their cudgels

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THE BETRAYAL FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER.

and staves and swords or daggers and vowed that they would form an armed guard and take Jesus away. It was—to their minds—a heroic moment. Here was a chance to do something to save the Master, and not simply to preach or to work marvels in His name. Let them all be up and doing, Caiaphas should never imprison Him!

Such was the common, resolute thought of all the men in that House of Bethany, the thought of everyone there except the Lord Himself, the Person whom they were concerned to save. They had not yet fully comprehended the spiritual nature of His mission and the impossibility of achieving it by valiance of arms. . . .

The Man of Nazareth rose to His feet. With hands extended on either side He calmed the gathering, urging them not to resist evil but to lay away their weapons. But His very next words were like daggers in their hearts: "For the Son of Man must be killed and buried—and after three days, rise again!"

"Far be it from Thee, Lord," cried Peter in horror, "this shall not be unto Thee!"

He vowed he would go to the death for Jesus's sake, and the others likewise said they could

never suffer Him to be taken. Peter's great arms were around his Master as if in rescue! He looked up into the grave face and as he saw that inexorable resolution to suffer, he lowered his head again and rested it against his hands which were clutching the breast of Jesus's robe.

"Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it," said Jesus gently, "but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it!" As they strove to grasp the meaning of these words, He explained to that awed assemblage of beloved personal followers: "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world—and lose his own soul?"

The Magdalene had heard outside the dreadful words of Peter's warning and the Lord's absolute refusal to desert His mission. Judas had heard them likewise, but oh, what a difference in the meaning of them to the converted girl and to the worldly seeker after religious gains!

The tragedy to Judas lay in the ruin of Messianic plans and the dread menace of the High Priest's vengeance. The tragedy to her was of a purblind world about to put the Godhead on a scaffold!

. . . The two encountered each other outside,

at the window next the doorway. "Mary,—art thou blind?" cried Judas. "Canst thou not see the folly of following this Pretender? His Kingdom is a myth—and Caiaphas will destroy the followers of this crownless King!"

"You have never understood Him, Judas," she replied in tones that would have thrilled a person of spiritual nature. "His Kingdom is the Kingdom within our hearts!"

But Judas could not or would not understand. He felt only the terrific material loss and immediate personal danger, and retorted:

"Who wants to die with this Jesus? Come, Mary, let us go to Caiaphas—for there is still time for us to win back all we have lost!"

She shuddered at the newly injected note of treachery, then was wildly panic-stricken, first despairingly arguing, "How canst thou betray Him, Judas! He is the Light of the World!" And then as he was deaf to her plea, seizing him by the arm and trying to stop his going . . . But the man of Kerioth broke away from her and vanished in the night.

See her still holding out pleading arms, crying out to him, and in terror hoping against hope that he may return!

Clink! Clank! Clink! Clink! Clank! Clank! One—two—three—four—five—six—a score more — twenty-seven — twenty-eight—*twenty-nine*—THIRTY!

It was the fat and pudgy hand of Caiaphas counting out silver pieces upon his sacerdotal table in the office of his house.

By twos and threes, or fours and fives, he lifted them out of the black money bag Annas held near his elbow. But only one coin at a time slipped to the end of his fingers and dropped sonorously on the table.

Caiaphas had finished his count. There was an evil leer on his face. He held one hand firmly over the piled coins and pointed with his other hand to a figure in the murk opposite him.

"On thine oath before God—thou wilt betray this Jesus to me?"

The figure in the shadows stirred. . . . It was not looking at the money which would indeed have been a pitiable sum for a Great Betrayal at any period of the world's history . . . a sum equivalent to about fifteen dollars in our money . . . a sum that bought a piece of land then when land was very cheap, but would not even provide a living to the receiver of it—

much less, any security of great wealth to gild (if that were possible) the moral consequences of a treacherous act!

Was it the fancied uncertainty of the betrayer's own mind—a divided and troubled mind, to be sure—that caused Caiaphas to think that he hesitated; that led the High Priest to drop coin after coin additional until the tale of Thirty Pieces of Silver was completed?

Or did other thoughts surge madly through the betrayer's brain—did he feel that he was in the net of the pursuers, hopelessly involved—and was he even in this moment struggling for some means of escape, some way of escaping from it other than the act that would make him execrated?

. . . Whatever it was, he hesitated no longer before Caiaphas' final gesture: the extension of five empty fingers to indicate that the tale had been told, that the traitor must complete his treachery or—and above him leered the menace of Caiaphas's wicked face—meet the same punishment as the Man he was betraying. . . .

The haggard figure bowed. . . . He was suffering an agony almost like that of a person in the article of death. . . . His eyes were bloodshot, his features haggard, his hands

clutching his throat, until at last, to the sound of deep sobs, the bowed head dropped on his arms resting on the table.

Caiaphas had triumphed!

He had bribed Judas, the disloyal servant of a gentle Master, to find Jesus and deliver Him up.

CHAPTER XVII

EUCHARIST

"Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me!"

It was Maundy Thursday. . . .

The Priests had resolved to put the Disturber away before the great Passover crowds that flocked into Jerusalem from many countries could be roused by the preaching of the New Reform. And Jesus, as was His custom, thought to omit none of the usual observances of the Holy Days but to do His humble and gentle part, regardless of the fear of consequences. Farthest in the world from Him was the thought of inciting revolt! He had quelled revolt on a previous occasion at the first showing of its head. He sought only righteousness, and that by unarmed force. Yet these wicked guides, in their own bad conscience, feared Him as an army with banners—would do Him to death rather than that the truth should be spoken of their practices.

. . . . . .

The Band ate their Last Supper together in an Upper Room which had been lent them for that purpose. We are not to think of this Passover meal as any opulent festivity but as the simplest taking of the ceremonial matzoths and wine and lamb and green herbs in a simple Jewish home, stucco-walled, low-ceilinged, bare of furniture save the necessary table and stools. There were no knives nor forks; the most primitive plates; a great jug of Passover wine and a common cup out of which to drink it. Whatever was in the centre, was passed from hand to hand and directly consumed. On the right a low wide archway was led up to by a stair of stone steps, up which the Master and His followers ascended, and as He seated Himself at the centre of the table—

John the beloved Disciple took the seat on His right. Next him was Peter, and along that row one might have seen among others the Gospeler Matthew and the Zealot Simon.

On Jesus's left sat Judas. The saintly James adjoined him, with the venerable Thaddeus, the skeptical Thomas and the lesser James nearer the end of the boards. On the opposite

side of the table, others of the Disciples faced the Saviour.

Their hearts were heavy, filled with the menace of Caiaphas's notice of impending arrest and their gaze was concentred on the Master of the feast who spoke with exceeding gentleness.

"I have desired," said Jesus, "to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more."

He spoke as calmly of the doom as if it were but one more event of His high and holy mission—not the sad end of all their hopes! And that deeper note of spirituality came in His further gentle request: "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you."

. . . Jesus rose and broke the bread in half, giving one piece to John, and the other piece to Judas. It was not the only food consumed there but it had a wonderful symbolism as His words broke on their startled ears:

"Take, eat; this is My Body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

It was, then, their farewell to that earthly comradeship; and thus in eating of the words of life as well as of the physical food He gave

them, they were partaking of their wonderful Saviour for the last time!

How different their reaction! John regards the bit of matzoth as real Body and takes it with devotion. Intensely Peter watches the act of Jesus in dividing His Body; he handles the matzoth with loving tenderness. With great devotion he put the piece of unleavened bread in his mouth, and then put the fingers of both hands together in front of his face, as if veiling the sacred act of consuming it. All the others take the bread with devotion save only Judas who pretends to eat his but does not. As he passes the remainder of the matzoth to James, Judas furtively drops his own piece to the table.

. . . What the Christian World has since lovingly known as the Holy Grail, stood in front of the Saviour's place. It was a large communal cup, stout, well-based, holding a full measure of the Passover wine.

Jesus stood for a long time looking first to the right of Him and then to the left and finally directly ahead, as if weighing the beautiful solemnity of the symbolism. . . .

With both hands He upraised the Grail to the level of His chest and said earnestly:

"This is My blood of the New Testament—which is shed for many unto the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it!"

Again John the Beloved received the first draught from His hands. As He gently lowered the Grail into the hands of John, His gaze began to turn and circle the table until His eyes fell at last on Judas, who at the behest of that gaze, and apparently against his will, was obliged to look up at Jesus. Jesus held the eyes of Judas steadily, gravely. The man of Kerioth tried to avert his eyes but could not do so. After the Grail had been passed to him, he could not drink from it—only pretend to. And the look of Jesus was no accusation but rather a sad comprehension and understanding.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me!"

. . . The duel of eyes was still betwixt Jesus and Judas. The others had not noticed it. Peter had devoutly raised the Cup to his lips, then hugged the Grail between chest and shoulder as earth's most precious possession. . . . But Judas—awaiting his turn—had put a jeweled hand to his brow. . . . His look was apprehensive. He swallowed several times as if choking.

As the Grail was being passed to him, he grasped it but did not want to drink. His lips fairly shook as he succeeded in raising it near his mouth. He shifted his eyes again and lowered the Grail to the table instead of drinking it. He was looking at it in a kind of fascinated horror, then glancing off uneasily—

All the Disciples started at the charge that one of them was a traitor. Peter hurriedly touched John on the arm, whispering to him to ask the Master who was meant. Everyone felt so personally concerned in this charge that they paid no attention to the actions of Judas, —Judas who was trying to divert attention and do the ordinary thing by wetting a bit of the matzoth in the cup.

"Behold," replied Jesus to the question from His right, "the hand of him that betrayeth Me—is with Me on the table!"

Judas withdrew his hand in haste, so did several others who happened to be resting their hands on the board.

Most of the Disciples hurriedly arose, protesting to Jesus their innocence, and unnoticed in the throng Judas rose too.

The accusation that did not name the actual guilty person seemed to stab Peter most vitally.

He had changed seats with John and was now looking up and gesticulating to his Master telling Him that such a thing as betrayal was impossible to his nature. . . . Instead of betrayal, he felt that the Master must realize his utter whole-souled love and devotion.

Gravely Jesus turned to him: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice!" Violently Peter disclaimed the imputation, then as the Master did not change His word, Peter sank back on the bench and leaned his head despairingly on his arms.

Judas was back of the Master now, fawning on Him and raising eloquent hands in protest, as sometimes people do protest most self-righteously against a true imputation. The Master gave him but a long stern look and his dismissal:

"That thou doest—do quickly!" . . . Judas stole out.

Soon after all the groups rose, and by two or threes passed slowly through the arch and down the stairway. Scenes of deep pathos ensued as Mary the Mother, seated outside at the head of the stairs, gave her farewell to the Disciples of her beloved Son.

Judas had passed her quickly with averted

gaze and with cloak upraised hiding his face and head. But John and James and Peter and Matthew and the rest paused each a moment or two to speak with her or silently make their leavetaking.

And when her Son came, she rose and put a hand on His shoulder and He put His arms around her. She was pleading with Him to escape to Galilee or Perea. She had brought her hands around His neck, and it was hard to resist her loving wish as she laid her face on His shoulder.

He took that Mother of His close to His heart, and when He kissed her on the forehead, holding both her temples, it was the farewell kiss of renunciation of the things of this life—even a mother's devotion—in the light of the higher duty.

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto," said Jesus softly, "but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many!"

He had released her and was starting to retire, going down the stairway. The pain on the Mother's face indicated that she could scarcely bear His leaving her.

Silently the next group of Disciples, leaving, descended the stairway, too respectful of her

suffering to speak! She dropped back again to her seat at the head of the stairs. . . . But Peter, last to leave, came up behind her; instead of speaking he bent his head and quietly held her right hand for a moment and kissed it reverently.

. . . As dusk came the shadows in the room lengthened to darkness. Only one strong light through the top of the window, from a brilliant cloud reflected from the sunken sun, shed a glory of light on the Madonna's face.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT GETHSEMANE

"Could ye not watch with me one little hour?"

Night! The mighty mass of Zion vague in the murk; a ghastly glimmer up the many steps to the Temple gate. Blank, black walls at the side, topped by a frowning tower almost indistinguishable in the darkness.

Now and again more details of the weird scene spring into view while the clatter of armed men is heard at the entrance and their irregularly flaming torches light up the foreground or the remoter vista. . . . Along that wall a door like a slit is thrust back and a cloaked figure emerges. . . . Is the face sombre, even tragic, or is it the flowing black cloak and the irregularity of the flares that give the sinister shadows? Unlike the soldiers he is unarmed; the sole object he is carrying being a great iron-grilled lantern between the fretwork of which the lamp rays beam uncertainly.

There is a Pharisee there too and an under-

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PETER FOR THE THIRD TIME DENIES THE LORD.

priest. They make the man in black cloak lead the way, and behind them come Malchus the captain of the Temple guard and a band of the Levite soldiers.

O murkiness of the Night that hath concealed innumerable black deeds since the world began, never hast thou fostered a villainy viler than this!

The moon rose o'er the Mount of Olives and looked down on the place of olive-crushing in the vale on its western flank. A file of peaceful looking men had been clambering up the steep slope from the brook Kedron and sought the vale, with a white-robed figure at their head. The Man as He walked seemed lost in thought —He was communing with Himself, abstracted, heedless of His surroundings. A scene of exquisite beauty lay before them: the moonlight whitening the grass, the shadowy olive and cypress trees up the sides of the amphitheatre seeming to form its perfect frame, and before them the over-hanging black and leafless branches of a dead tree like Nature's etching!

We have said that it was a peaceful Company. Only two of the Twelve bore swords; others, particularly the older men, helped them-

selves up the steep way by their staves. The Leader carried neither staff nor cudgel; it was not only a peaceful but also a pensive climb, for the thoughts of all were of their Last Supper together, and to the Leader Himself the time and place of Gethsemane, the "place of pressing of olives," was portentous! At the centre of the vale He addressed the three men nearest Him:

"Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray."

Peter, John and James obeyed the behest. 'Twas evident that for all these men the nooks and dells of Olivet were Nature's dormitories where, in that semi-tropic land, they might fling themselves down on the soft bed of Mother Earth and have their rest. Like the modern Bedouin, they wore long robes and carried shawls or rugs for protection from the evening's chill. It was the work of but a moment for each of the dozen followers to throw their shawls or cloaks on the ground and adjust them for reclining or sleeping. The little boy was with the Company too, that little Mark who loved to write on waxen tablets with a stylus, —who hoped one day to write the life of Jesus, and eagerly scrutinized the veteran Matthew's

task. . . . Against the night's cold, Matthew took him in his arms and let the drowsy boy sleep.

Jesus had gone some little way up the hillside of the Garden. The three men His watchers—James, John and Peter, were seated on their cloaks on the ground. John and Peter talked. James was silent and nodding. John's answers to Peter came slower and still more slowly. . . . They ceased altogether. Peter continued watching a long time with head upraised, then his head began to nod too, and finally it dropped back against a friendly nearby bank in sleep.

The white-robed One in the moonlight was approaching a shining flat rock. The Rock seemed like a natural altar. Jesus stood there with hands partly upraised to Heaven. His soul was sorrowful. He felt even as in the hour of death. . . . The Man with His rigid adherence to righteousness had never faltered. He had always felt that the hatred of the Law-babbling hypocrites and of the worldly, purse-hurt Priests would surely—sometime—put a violent end to His career. He had faced those inevitable consequences of His acts, had indeed resolved to die for the sake of His mission.

. . . But now, it came to Him, the doom was vivid and impending. . . . An hour more, and He might be suffering its pangs! . . . Indeed He suffered them now in mental imagery. . . . Groaning, He dropped to His knees and put His head and arms down on the Rock top in despair . . . He rested there. . . . Slowly, painfully He raised His head and gazed Heavenward. The struggle was becoming still more acute. The agony made His body quiver with the anguish of His soul as He prayed aloud to God.

"Father, if Thou be willing,—remove this cup from Me!"

Would the Father remove that cup? Was it not indeed the law of His being that He must not hold back from drinking it! God could not help Him—help Him to be false! Brokenly Jesus continued the prayer:

"Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done!"

He was still struggling and His hands were still tightly clenching His robe and body. He managed to rise and descended from the altar place. . . .

Jesus surveyed the scattered groups of the Disciples in the moonlight. They were all

sleeping now though some had held out long . . . but even Simon had let go his sword and the stylus had dropped out of Matthew's hand and his head had fallen back, while his left arm still held Mark in the folds of his robe.

Nearer by, the three chosen watchers were deep in sleep. "Couldst ye not watch with Me one little hour?" cried Jesus gently but with the bitter thought that in all that Agony not even His most faithful ones could keep awake to sympathize.

He did not rouse them but went back to His Rock of Agony, kneeling there again. Hopeless, exhausted, with a deep sob He let His arms drop on the Rock and remained there motionless for many minutes in an attitude of utter prostration. He was praying anew, at the end of this period of exhaustion, to His Heavenly Father. He had nerved Himself to the completion of His appointed task, receiving a great afflatus of spirituality from His contact with the Divine. . . . And now—though still suffering intensely—He arose with the wondrous resolve of an indomitable soul in a racked body, and faced the issue. . . .

Far at the end of the Garden flares of torches were making weird and flickering lights like

glowworms through the distant trees. A group was approaching softly, nevertheless a person intently listening could have heard the branches disturbed, the footfalls on crackling sticks, or the occasional sharp impact of a spear or lance against a stone.

The lights were drawing nearer now. The heads of the men began to show distantly. The flares gave a chiaroscuro effect. . . . One man apparently was walking a little ahead of the others.

As the noise increased, it woke Matthew who raised his head and looked around. Seated, he could not see the men, but the feet and ankles of persons approaching were now visible under the branches of the trees. Matthew shook little Mark by the shoulder. Both rose to their feet. The former publican picked up a stone. If now it should really be the High Priest's emissaries come out to attack the Master—

At the far end, the men with the spears, lances and torches were entering the Garden, led by the man with the lantern. The leading figure was that of Judas. After the steep ascent of the Mount, Simeon had laboriously caught up with him. The Pharisee put an authoritative hand on Judas's shoulder and asked how the

person accused by the Sanhedrin was to be identified.

"Whomsoever I shall kiss," whispered Judas, "That same is He; hold Him fast!"

The traitor crept forward to where the white-robed figure stood, unresisting to receive that traitor kiss! Followed Simeon and Malchus and the Levite guard, walking up the somewhat difficult and uneven ground.

. . . The main group of the Disciples had been roused by the increasing tumult. Simon had wakened first among the larger group and Peter amongst the drowsy watchers. Those with staves had seized them quickly, and Simon the Zealot and Peter were brandishing their swords. Others picked up stones, and soon all were rushing to the spot where the Man of Kerioth had reached Jesus, held the lantern up to His face to make sure and then had placed a kiss on Jesus's cheek.

"Friend," asked Jesus quietly, "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Friend! The word was like a blow to Judas. . . . He drew back, glowering at Jesus. Then he gave an anxious look back over his shoulder. He was ashamed at the reply of his erstwhile Master and cowered whilst his rolling

eyes looked up with a tragic expression. . . . He slank away as Simeon and Malchus and the rest came on.

"That is He, the Law-breaking Nazarene!" shouted the venomous Simeon to the soldiers. "Take Him and bind Him!"

Malchus started to obey the word but he was rudely halted by Peter with his good sword, and his chief lieutenant was likewise halted by the Zealot whilst the other nine Disciples thrust themselves into the group, waving menacing staves and cudgels.

Peter with a mighty blow struck at Malchus and wounded him terribly with a long cut of the face and ear. Simon was doing valiant execution, thrusting out with his sword so that not even the long lances and spears of the soldiers could get him. John was fighting a Levite,—though armed only with a cudgel. Little Mark urged on Peter, Matthew, Simon and the rest excitedly, running in and out unscathed among the shifting figures.

Malchus lay still and bloody at Jesus' feet. Peter's vicious buffet had wounded him severely. He was unconscious, and it was a question whether the blow was a mortal one, for it must have jarred the brain.

The Leader of the Galilean Band bent down and gently touched the side of Malchus' head. As if by magic the long deep wound dried and the blood disappeared. The swooned man lay there with a perfectly whole face and ear in profile, apparently untouched by the sword cut of Peter. The eyes fluttered and the eyelids at last drew back, and the recumbent man looked around half-dazed.

"Put up again thy sword into its place," motioned Jesus to Peter, "for all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword!"

Again—yes, again, and for the last time—the kindly Master had quelled the spirit of warfare and bloodshed albeit at the cost of Himself. For at His words His followers stopped fighting and threw away their weapons, even Peter letting his sword drop to the ground.

The soldiers had still their lances extended in their hands as Simeon bade them approach Jesus and arrest Him. Malchus had risen, and Simeon's efforts to get Malchus to act had been fruitless. So the Pharisee had taken charge, and as Jesus saw the hostile array and Simeon peremptorily ordering a group of the men to bind Jesus with a rope, the Man of Nazareth replied:

"Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize Me?"

He could not forbear to remind them of the skulking method of the capture; the cowardly device of the Chief Priest to attack Him when and where His popular supporters could not appear. "I sat daily in the Temple teaching," said Jesus sternly, "and yet ye took Me not!"

The soldiers were now binding the hands of Jesus. Malchus alone who had been miraculously healed seemed to have no part or lot in their venom. But the only thought of Jesus was for the safety of them who had been His followers and who but for His intervention would have fought to the end. . . . Four of them were already tied up, all were arrested and under guard. . . .

"If, therefore, ye seek Me," Jesus addressed Malchus and Simeon, "let these others go their way!"

It was evident that Simeon planned to make a round-up of the entire Band and take them all before Caiaphas. Here at last Malchus recovered some of his strength and in gratitude for his healing insisted that this wish at least of the Prisoner be carried out. Against the opposition of Simeon he cut the ropes from the

wrists of the four bound Disciples and told the soldiers to release them.

Nothing could stop Simeon's triumph however in having obtained the Chief Accused whom they had sought, and from now began the jeering and mocking of them who carried out the orders of the authorities, here the Levitical Temple guard and later the legionaries of Cæsar!

. . . Little Mark had found Peter's sword where it had been thrown away. The child felt a wild impulse to wield it against the captors of Jesus. Of a sudden he realized how little and weak and helpless he was as against all those big men, and he fell sobbing against the broad friendly hilt of the sword.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MAN AT THE BRAZIER

"Woman, I know Him not!"

"THEY are coming! they are coming!—bringing the Nazarene!" shouted the servant maid who had been peering through the lattice into the darkness of the early hour, a darkness now fitfully lighted by the torches of the returning Temple party.

She waved back excitedly to the underlings and guards in the courtyard of the Palace of Caiaphas. Servants made ready to fling back the doors. In the center of the courtyard a brazier of coals burned high. Around it was a circular coping where folk might warm themselves at the blazing embers. Beyond at the left a broad stairway led curving upward to the main floor of the High Priest's abode. A sort of colonnade divided the courtyard space from the stairway and from the vestibule at the head of the staircase, which looked directly down on the centre of the court.

Great draped curtains marked off the vestibule from the living apartments of Caiaphas.

The returning soldiers came with a clatter of spears and lances on the stone pavement. In their midst, Simeon and Malchus directed the guards who walked on either side of the prisoner, and Jesus and his captors were followed by a still larger throng of the soldiers with their weapons.

The spacious courtyard was a sort of second barracks for the Levite guard who knew it as well as they knew their own quarters. After the big clanging doors were shut nearly all relaxed, some warming themselves at the brazier, others chaffing the servant maids of the Palace who brought refreshment of food and drink, and still others merely lounging, awaiting further orders. . . .

A big skulking man had entered behind some of the Levites and soldiers. Another and much younger man whose countenance was of effeminate beauty had brought him in. The youthful man took his stand just within the window where (being more or less a frequenter of the place) he was unnoticed. But the giant-like, heavy-set man went to the centre of the room to warm himself at the coals. He was terrified

when half-recognized by one of the younger Levites who gave him a questioning look, but the burly visitor shook his head vigorously to indicate that the Levite was mistaken. . . .

It was the hour of triumph of Caiaphas. That worldly and cruel priest who had experienced many months of anxiety lest the Galilean disturber o'erthrow his regime, now had the gentle Man of Nazareth firmly bound and surrounded by the pikes and spears of his creatures! Caiaphas smirked and leered. At last Simeon had made the arrest.

The Pharisee and Malchus brought the prisoner to the first landing, and Caiaphas looked down upon Him from the top of the steps. Back of Jesus was an array of lances that might have guarded a group of desperate outlaws instead of a pensive, unresisting bounden man!

There was nothing judicial, nothing of the tone or look of the examining Magistrate in the High Priest's mien. In his private thought he had condemned Jesus long ago. He had since obtained the assent of the Sanhedrin to the seizure of the Man by midnight guile and treachery. With a look of contempt Caiaphas picked up the end of the rope binding the wrists of Jesus and sneered:

"Wouldst destroy Jehovah's Temple and rebuild it in three days? Pah!"

He flung the bit of rope end from him and turned his back on the Accused, after waving dismissal to the lancemen and an order to the keepers to bring Jesus up. What need had he now to fear this Galilean! The many-turreted city and its inhabitants lay drowsy in slumber. Except the feeble scattered Twelve, no one knew that Jesus had been arrested. It was not as yet the hour of cock crow. . . . Before the morning were far advanced, it would be possible to complete all formalities.

One brief look Caiaphas swept over the courtyard before he marched majestically through the draperies. A stranger or two were loitering down there, but no one to give him any concern. The guards were idling, but presently they should be called into service. Below, a servant of the Temple spoke sneeringly to the handsome visitor at the window, as the speaker pointed upward to the white-robed Man on the stair:

"Just another Zealot upstart from Galilee —the town's full of them!"

The man at the window did not reply. He buried his head on his arms as they rested on

the sill. . . . The man at the brazier heard and looked around with a crafty and furtive expression, drawing his big cloak up around his great shoulders.

"Look!" hissed the maid carrying the tray of drinks, to her favorite guardsman, "I've seen that fellow before!" She pointed to the man at the fire. "Wait a minute, I'll satisfy myself," she said going over to him.

The maid peered searchingly at the big stranger. "Art thou not also one of His Disciples?" she said, pointing up to the Galilean.

The big fellow drew his head inwardly and away from her and moved his hands in sharp dissent. His face was contorted and his eyes were shifty.

"I am not!" he cried out . . . but the maid only shrugged and looked back knowingly to her guardsman friend. . . .

The Man of Nazareth was slowly mounting the stair in obedience to the promptings of the soldiers pointing upward with their lances. He had a momentary pause at the uppermost colonnade, and the stranger below, looking up in sorrow, met the eye of Jesus. That meeting of glances had a strange effect. The visitor to the courtyard lowered his head and one could

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PONTIUS PILATE AND HIS WIFE PROCULLA AT THE ENTRY OF JESUS AND BARABBAS INTO THE JUDGMENT HALL.

see the whites of his eyes as they rolled in their sockets. Was he indeed feeling an emotion of falsity and shame?

The tragic procession was now nearly out of sight. The soldiers no longer under the eye of Caiaphas and Malchus, began to talk more loudly and the maids to serve them additional drinks and cakes. There was much frolicking and chaffing twixt the two jolly maid servants and the Levitical band, and again the maid who had questioned before, pointed out the crouched figure at the brazier to two of the men. This time she said more directly:

"This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth."

The accusation was so direct that two of the soldiers stepped to the fireplace. One stuck his finger into the stranger's robe and leaned against him with his shield; the other addressed him with free gesticulation that pointed upward to the Accused and downward to the suspected.

"Did not I see thee in the Garden with Him?" he asked.

Of course the guard could not be sure—it had been moonlight in Gethsemane and the affray had happened so suddenly and ended so quickly that one could not be positive of the identifica-

tion. Still, the man was a stranger here—and more than likely one of those fanatical followers.

The suspected one rose to his feet. He raised his hand above his head as if in solemn vow, then clenched his fist, and swore a great oath.

"Curse you for your lying tongue!" he cried, "I was not there, and I swear I know not this Man of whom ye speak!"

As the soldiers turned away, the big man put his clenched fist to his mouth. . . . Hark! . . . What was that?

The cock crow—

Chanticleer's song preluding the very darkest hour before dawn! The man, for all his just voiced rage and indignation, turned white. . . . Jesus, passing through the great curtain, had looked back and had seen. With a regretful smile He went on. The big man raised his hands over his head in an attitude of agonizing supplication to Him, and then clasping them together in agony, and pushing with great violence three or four bystanders out of the way, rushed to the door, burst it open, and went out. . . .

It was Peter's thrice denial of His Lord.

The follower overcome at the sneer against Jesus—the one lying with his head on the window sill—was no other than the beloved John!

CHAPTER XX

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

"I find no fault in Him—"

The Sanhedrin was the corrupt Council of a decaying regime. In no wise did it represent fairly or impartially the people of Judæa. It was entirely subservient to Caiaphas, the members dependent upon him for worldly privilege and a share in the Temple's profits and sinecures. Jesus was hurried before it. The examination by Caiaphas and the condemnation were only formalities, carrying out the High Priest's wicked twisting of the Scripture that "one man should die for the sins of the people."

The plot went through the Sanhedrin and past it, right up to final judgment by the Prætorium. For the Priests knew that they possessed not the power of life and death. *That* was reserved unto Rome. The grand climax of their conspiracy, after getting the Galilean formally condemned by the Sanhedrin,

was to accuse Him before Pontius Pilate the Roman procurator of Judæa and demand the death penalty.

They felt the imperative necessity of acting quickly. Before night the Temple and the ways of the city would be thronged with the faithful celebrating the Holy Days, among them thousands upon thousands of Galilean Zealots who might try to effect a jail delivery of a fellow-Galilean accused by the Hierarchy. If the deed were done before eve, this would be impossible. About nine o'clock in the morning they hurried Jesus, still attended by the Temple guards, befor the Judgment Hall of Pilate.

Lucius Pontius Pilate and Joseph Caiaphas were ancient foes. The sentiment of the City in times agone had risen against the Governor's taking of the Temple funds to build the waterworks, and Caiaphas had dared to lay the complaint before Tiberius Cæsar, and that shrewd, oily, cruel monarch of monarchs had conveyed delicate word to the Procurator that he must not needlessly flout nor defy the racial religious sentiment. . . . Warily the Roman procurator and the Jewish High Priest watched each other's every move. . . . Though Pilate held the power of removal of the High Priest,

nevertheless he could not remove except for cause, and the Jewish people on account of their long connection with Rome as a federated power still had friends at court. . . . Caiaphas could not defy Pilate; Pilate found it difficult to refuse any ordinary request of Caiaphas.

The Roman Governor was richly dressed. He sat on a dais encompassed within the sheltering wings of a vast bronze Roman eagle. Four incense burners, two on each side, sent up their pleasing vapors like fleecy clouds. Pilate's brow was glowering, and his countenance was not at ease. He fingered the large square signet ring on his left hand, and anon his gold-banded arms and slender tapering hands, full-jeweled at the wrists, fumbled with his figured toga or sought support on the arms of his vice-regal throne. Through the pillars on his right, one could view the adjoining barrackroom of his Roman cohorts, tall giants of fellows recruited from North Italy and Gaul, who wore heavy bronze breastplates and helmets and were armed with the short Roman sword and the legionary's long and massy pike.

. . . After all, he had less than a legion (about 6,000 men) to keep in order this refrac-

tory country. The least pleasant feature of his post was the journey up to and sojourn in Jerusalem for the religious days on which occasion it was most feared that revolt might break out. Such a force as his was but a handful against a wild and fanatical multitude: he had to guard against the wiles or treachery of the local Hierarch and equally against the rising tide of Zealotry. . . .

Caiaphas and the delegates of the Sanhedrin, with them Simeon and Annas and Malchus, approached with a high petition! Below on the left stood the fettered Prisoner, accompanied by a guard from the Temple. The immediate cause of their assembly—the Man of Nazareth Himself—was ignored as Pilate and Caiaphas confronted each other, measuring strengths. . . .

The High Priest gave with much solemnity and formality the courtesy of the Roman salute —the hand high upraised—to his Roman superior. Pilate acknowledged it with the briefest gesture of the arm.

Caiaphas opened the scroll of the Judgment of the Sanhedrin, presented it before the Justice Seat of Rome. Pilate waved it back. He had no mind to pore over documents! They

must come to the point and state what they wanted.

And now the High Priest began to speak. He argued at length, with much oriental gesticulation, pointing to the scroll and then to the Person accused. Cunningly the prosecutor did not enter into the case as submitted to the Sanhedrin: the alleged blasphemy of Jesus calling Himself the Son of Jehovah. His voice growing louder and his accusation more ominous, he framed a monstrous and lying fabrication out of whole cloth that he thought would signify to the Roman power a specific act of treason on the part of Jesus against the Emperor:

"We found this fellow perverting the nation —and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He, Himself, is Christ, a King!"

The Governor became suddenly interested. He turned his head and looked at the Accused. The Prisoner stood pensive and silent in the face of the charge. Pilate rose. He walked over toward Jesus and gazed at Him searchingly.

What a fateful meeting with a meaning to the world's after-history! The Viceroy of the temporal Monarch of Monarchs; before him— a culprit—the spiritual King of Kings! The

power of the sword, and the power of righteousness; the power that is transient, mutable, often uprooted, and the power of the Spirit which is immortal.

Deep compassion, strange to say, for his temporal ruler in the eyes of the Accused.

A deep wonderment and a keen desire to know the truth, if only to satisfy himself, on the part of the Judge.

"Art thou the King of the Jews?"

. . . Caiaphas laughed a derisive laugh. His deriding note found an echo from both Jew and Roman, so ridiculous did they think the notion of this meek and humble Teacher being a king!

There was no answer to Pilate's query. Jesus looked at the Governor without saying a word. Then, his anger rising, Pilate questioned the Accused's silence.

"Answerest Thou nothing?" he asked sternly.

"Behold how many things they witness against Thee," he said, pointing back to the venomous throng, "and knowest Thou not that I have the power of life and death over Thee?"

It was indeed as if the Judge were arguing with his Prisoner to make adequate defence;

begging Him to protect Himself and to deny the accusation. "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" he again asked insistingly.

"My Kingdom is not of this world," at last replied the Man of Nazareth gently, "but, for this end was I born, that I should bear witness unto the truth. And everyone who is of the truth—heareth my voice!"

The truth! Who knew the truth? None of the Stoic or Epicurean schools surely, nor the augurs pretending to divine the future from the stomachs of birds, nor even the God-Emperor at Rome: was Pilate's secret thought. And this Man felt convinced that He knew the truth and that He dwelt therein,—something esoteric, evidently, and far removed from Pilate's or the High Priest's temporal reign. . . .

Pilate considered Jesus gravely, wonderingly and finally left Him to return to the throne. . . . Caiaphas was again at his elbow. The Priest was pointing out the Accused as a menace to Rome's rule. He was using his force and all the support back of him from the eager faces of his train and all the mob force that he had carefully worked up and the hostile faces peering through the iron grilled doors of the

Judgment Hall to overawe the mind of Pilate into the belief that here stood a malefactor that would interfere with the security of both the heads of the State. . . .

Yet—"I find no fault in this Man," was the verdict of Pilate.

The accusers murmured and remonstrated. Without, the crowd was becoming larger and more menacing. Its swelling cry could now be heard. The voice of Caiaphas was upraised in warning of the consequences of freeing the disturber as he rolled up the scroll with an indignant expression.

"—no cause of death in Him!"

Could he not—thus quickly ran Pilate's thought—save Jesus's life, and yet partly pacify these jealous sectaries?

Allow them punishment of the Man, and yet not bring on his (Pilate's) soul the dark crime of putting Jesus to death?

"No cause of death in Him"—and yet He must pay, by the stripes and ignominy of His body, somewhat to satisfy the Priests' indictment—"therefore," adjudged Pilate, "I will chastise Him and let Him go!"

The Prisoner did not flinch. . . . He made no plea for mercy. . . . In the words of Isaiah,

"As the sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth."

Roman flagellation of prisoners was extremely cruel. The arms of the victim were bound to a post, above his head. His bare back felt the full force of the blows, which were multiple and savage and cut weals in the flesh; at times death resulted from the severity of the floggings. Besides the suffering, the ignominy of it was terrible. The torture and the humiliation together would have fed full fat the grudge of any party less implacable than these priestly Accusers!

"Scourge ye Him!" Pilate summoned the chief Centurion and gave the order.

The officer was a tall but not hulking man, of fine virile proportions, clear-eyed, with features of natural goodness, though the cruel ways of his calling had seamed and gullied cruel lines, —and there was a sneer on his face now as he heard Pilate's order and told Jesus to enter the barrackroom, then gesturing to the other soldiers to go with Him. Jesus did not answer but turned and followed them.

The Priests and Pharisees realized they were about to be balked of their prey by Pilate's manœuvre unless they could quickly find some

means of circumventing it. The Pharisees began to talk excitedly to Simeon their leader, pointing out what could be done. Caiaphas came up and spoke to Simeon and Annas. There was gold in Annas's well-filled purse, and the rich and worldly class who constituted the indictors of Jesus, had much money about them.

"This Temple-defiling Galilean must not be allowed to live!" said the High Priest in low tones to his fellow conspirators. "Go ye and bribe the people to cry out for His death!"

Simeon and Annas and several of the servants of the Temple slipped quietly out of the Judgment Hall. . . .

The High Priest approached the Governor again. The Elders were solidly in back of him. They seemed by the intensity and solemnity of their features to be joining in his official plea as the representatives of the Hierarchy. The forefinger of Caiaphas pointed to the barrack-room and the Man about to be scourged there. The weight of the ecclesiastical State—the State that Pilate had before offended to his cost—was behind the words:

"Full well thou knowest we have a Law, and by our Law He ought to die—because He hath made Himself the Son of God!"

. . . But Pilate did not answer—then. During the speech he looked over and beyond them like a man whose unseeing eyes are trying to gaze into an insoluble riddle!

He gestured that they should postpone their plea, and legionaries waved them back from the Roman procurator who sat buried in thought. . . .

CHAPTER XXI

PROCULLA'S PRAYER

"As thy beloved Wife I ask this!"

"What art thou doing with this Jesus?"

It was the voice of Proculla, the stately and beautiful wife of Pontius Pilate. Six years before she had been permitted, by a special favor of the Emperor, to accompany her husband to Judæa. She took with her to the far outlying Province two comely nieces who were also her maids of honor.

A Roman wife never meddled with her husband's political concerns. It was, therefore, some terrible agitation that had brought her to the Prætorium this morning, with her maids supporting her on either side. The tall pikes and persons of the legionaries gave way at her approach. Entering by the side of the Hall back of Pilate, Proculla and her maids came down the steps and surveyed the scene. . . . Pilate sate on his vice-regal dais, lost in thought. . . . The distressed Proculla felt that

he was—in his own masculine way—as deeply worried over this matter as she was herself.

"What *hast* thou done with this Jesus?"

She had come to him and softly put her hand on his shoulder,—and as he turned, she raised her other hand to indicate the prisoner's dock. A wild fear seized her that the Man already had been condemned. The nightmare of the night before came back. . . .

A saintly Martyr being nailed to the gallows; a jeering crowd of his fellow-countrymen mocking Him; the agony, the blood, the heartbreak, —and then—more confused—the penalty of that tragic iniquity: the tragic end of Pilate and herself!

Not only her voice but her whole pleading, tense and almost hysterical manner urged this question.

Pilate waved his hand to the legionaries to pull the cords of the great draperies opposite them.

Slowly the gigantic curtains swung back. Down there—in the barrackroom—a big brute of a man, armed with a scourge of many flails, was whipping to ribbons the skin and flesh of the delicate-looking Prisoner whose wrists were bound by thongs to a post.

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"WHAT EVIL HATH HE DONE- I HAVE FOUND NO CAUSE OF DEATH IN HIM."

As the lash repeatedly descended on the bare back, Proculla pulled back with a cry,—covering her face with her hands. . . . The ponderous curtain closed again. . . . She knelt at Pilate's feet, her hands clasped before her in entreaty.

"I entreat thee to have nothing to do with that just Man—" she begged, brokenly, "—as thy beloved Wife I beg this!" Proculla's lips were close to Pilate's now. She seemed infinitely desirable, infinitely worth pleasing, Aphrodite herself in face and figure, the full lips so kissable, the right hand gently stroking Pilate's arm, but the lovely head slowly shaking back and forth as if to say: "No, no, no! You must not sanction such legal murder!"

"Last—night—" sobbed Proculla, "I—suffered — many — grievous — things — in — a — Dream,—because—of—Him!"

Pilate, who respected dreams as the gods' warning to mortals of events to come, was sorely distressed. He raised her up and wiped away her tears, tried in his rough way to comfort her. "It is a difficult case—to handle as you wish," said the puzzled Governor, in low tones. "Now—if I might find some way out—"

Caiaphas had witnessed the tender pleading

of Proculla with growing anger. The scene spoke its full meaning to him, just as if they had cried it aloud. Now was the time to act, or he would be utterly balked of his prey. . . . Caiaphas came up on the other side of Pilate and pointing to the barrackroom, said with a sneer that was also a veiled menace:

"If thou lettest this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend! For He maketh Himself King of the Jews, which is against Cæsar's rule!"

Pilate drew back the arm with which he had been fondling Proculla. The thought gave him pause. What if Caiaphas really laid such a complaint before Rome? Or any other of these stiff-necked Priests brought such an information? He would lose the favor of the Emperor even o'er such a false and monstrous charge—Tiberius would certainly discipline,—yes, probably would kill him. . . . 'Twould be the end of everything when Sejanus, Cæsar's minister, sent the swift command that the disgraced Governor open his own veins in the bath.

Worried, drawing his hand across his brow, anon rolling his eyes in shifting gaze, and again cupping his chin in thought, Pilate reflected there must yet be some way to satisfy these provincials about this Jesus, else the rising tide

of their enmity must engulf him. He bethought himself of a last desperate expedient. . . . It might possibly be that the Chief Priest did not represent the People's voice. The mob spirit howled for a victim. But it might be satisfied with another one than Jesus, even the noted outlaw Barabbas who had been lying in jail, awaiting sentence. . . . In that case, the popular verdict would stop the accusatory mouths and nolle the indictment. . . . Pilate's order to a legionary was brief:

"Go, bring Jesus and Barabbas!"

He decided that Proculla must not see this confronting.

He had indicated to her that he would try to save Jesus, but her distressed mien and continued pleading showed her skeptical of his success. Her agony (if he failed) would make her ill. . . . Pilate loved his wife. . . . Hard, merciless soldier as he was, to whom the crucifixion of a few score seditious Judæans was no more than a day's routine—he wanted to spare her, and now took her up in his arms, raising her to her feet and telling her that he would do his utmost. . . . Pilate slowly released his wife with a gesture of dismissal. "Go home and keep the house!" he said quietly. . . . And

yet she could not. . . . Unknown to him, the agonized Wife and her maids lurked back there in the shadows, waiting the event.

What a difference twixt Christ and Barabbas!

The sinless, patient Man falsely accused of treason, and the notorious outlaw that some of the more fanatical patriots admired for his stirring of sedition but the rational ones knew to be a plain robber and killer!

Could any assembly prefer to see Jesus condemned and the assassin and spoiler freed? It lay in the Governor's power to release one prisoner to the people as a mark of the Imperial liberality on their holy days. Pilate hoped that the juxtaposition of the saint and the sinner before them would make them see the difference and add their voice to his own for the exculpation of "this just Man."

. . . Caiaphas and the Elders hoped otherwise. They knew mob feeling and were prepared to play on it. The assemblage on the steps at the other side of the grilled gates, up on the opposite portico and down in the street, was largely packed with the High Priest's creatures, as we have seen. . . . Simeon and

Annas and others of the Sanhedral party went down among them. . . . The gesturing, and the excited talk, and the milling about, and the speechmaking before groups, increased. Intermingled with the buzz began to be audible the Mob Beast's roar. . . .

CHAPTER XXII

IN THE BARRACKROOM

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns—"

What had been happening behind the barrackroom draperies?

Let us look at it through the eyes of a furtive visitor, the man who had betrayed Jesus and who—like the murderer haunting the scene of his crime—was brought hither by an irresistible attraction! He slipped in while the guardsmen were busy, hid next a pillar, found at last a niche where he could secretly survey —not the Scourging itself which was hidden by another pillar, but the terrible silhouette of it flung against the opposite wall!

. . . They were changing scourgers now. The first man, tired by his efforts, was being relieved by an even more burly ruffian.

In the centre of the room most of the legionaries were drinking and carousing at the barrackroom table, utterly forgetful of the devilish scene so close to them. Cruelty to the unfor-

tunates in disfavor with the authorities, was a commonplace of their life. . . . The first scourger, now relieved, joined them and quaffed long and deep. . . . The Centurion, their commander, stood near the table munching fruit. . . . He was grinning at what one of the soldiers was saying.

The new man entered on his work with zest. He had an iron arm and he wielded the whip vigorously.

Whiz-z-z-z! The cat-tails eating into the flesh—the contraction and quiver of the frail bare body—the involuntary pull of the upraised arms bound by the wrists to the top of the post —the low moan of the victim—Judas flinched as if his back had received it. . . . At each stroke a shudder passed through his frame. . . . Stony-eyed, he darted from pillar to niche and niche to pillar. . . . once or twice sank down, covering his head as if to blot out the fearful sight . . . but ever returning with horror-stricken eyes fastened on that quivering silhouette!

He looked down once, saw at his girdle the price of villainy; the black bag containing the Silver Pieces; with loathing he dropped it to the floor!

The man who had first scourged Jesus—idling with another at the window—felt the prick of a thorn bush overhanging there. A drop of blood slowly exuded from the tiny wound. The Legionary called his companion's attention to it, then pointed to the bush.

"Look!" he said. "We must have a crown for this King!" . . . He was busily cutting the thorny branches of the plant with his dagger, and handing them to the other legionary who plaited them in a rough circle.

"And a robe for the King!" shouted another group who had overheard.

"Yes—and a throne for Him to sit on—" cried the carousers at the table.

"A sceptre, too, for Him to rule the world!"

The Centurion stopped eating. . . . He looked over to the poor Prisoner who had almost swooned under the length and severity of the punishment.

"He's had enough!" muttered the Centurion. Stronger men than this he had known to die under the cruel flails.

A stop must be put to it, else there would be no prisoner to deliver up!

The officer walked over to the Scourger and

bade him cease, even as the whip was uplifted high in air. . . . He looked almost indignantly at the Mocker who had dug up an old purple-banded robe of Pilate's and was yelling: "Here's the robe! Here's the robe!"

. . . Faugh! Let them have their joke! What was it of his concern? . . .

The man flung the vice-regal garment over the raw, bloody back. They untied Jesus, brought Him over, and lifted Him to the table top.

A drinker turned his stool bottom upward, and they made Jesus sit on it. The men at the window had completed their work and provided the Crown of Thorns. . . .

A burly legionary first showed it to Him and then jammed it down on His head. He leaned back to admire his handiwork—already starting tiny red rivulets down the Sufferer's brow—then bowed and knelt in mock obeisance, crying as his sides shook with laughter:

"Hail, King of the Jews!"

The whole company were frolicking around their new-crowned "King," some buffeting Him, others jesting and laughing till one fellow capped the climax by shouting:

"This King must have his sceptre!"—then

taking a reed out of a broom fagot and sticking it vertically in his bound hands. . . .

The Scourger wanted Him to drink too, but He would not. . . . The man tossed off the cup at one draught himself. . . . A mocker pretended to kiss his robe, then wiped his dirty sword on it. . . . Another knelt and raised his lance in mock fealty. . . . Another showed the rope wherewith they were wont to tie malefactors on the Cross.

"Stop all this horseplay!" cried the Centurion, suddenly feeling disgust. "They'll be wanting Him in the Judgment Hall presently! . . . Go ye to the armor room and perform your accustomed tasks."

The Centurion and Jesus were left alone. . . .

The eyes of the Man of Sorrows looked down on those of the stern Centurion. In the eyes of the Sufferer there was no begging appeal; the suffering in his face did not invite pity so much as loving understanding. His very wounds—the marks of blood and buffets—seemed only to cry out: "Here is a Man suffering for the sins of all men!"

. . . What if this Man were not mere pretender but a lover of the true, the just and the noble, whom all the world misunderstood—its

Redeemer, not its disturber; the Man among men whom all should love; or (as the Centurion had heard him called) the very Son of God. . . .

At that steady, compassionate gaze the Roman clenched both hands to his breast. He lowered his eyes. His face was reverent. Would he speak to the Man, strive to gain some further light?

But then came the order of Pilate: "Bring Jesus and Barabbas!" The Centurion woke from his day-dream. He summoned a legionary to fetch the Robber from the adjacent barrackroom and himself brought forth Jesus.

. . . The shuddering Judas, collapsed in his niche, turned his eyes and saw the loathed black bag at his feet. . . . He saw the Centurion leading Jesus away . . . through the opened drapery he saw the High Priest and the Elders still insistent at the ear of Pilate, and with a renewed quiver of anguish, sensed Doom! Could he wipe off the blood—the blood of an innocent Man—from his hands? . . . At least, he could throw back the price of his villainy! . . . Judas crawled out of the barrackroom, again clutching the black bag.

In the mob outside below a Temple priest

was arguing with his countrymen. He had partly unfolded a scroll of the Law, and was quoting chapter and text for the Galilean's condemnation.

Higher officials were using still more persuasive arguments. Simeon with his shekels had bribed a group of the Temple's creatures to shout for a capital sentence. Annas was appealing to the offscourings of the City—beggars, junkmen, pariahs, and the like—out of the contents of a richly embroidered gold money bag that almost made their eyes pop out of the sockets!

Avaricious hands surrounded him on every side, eager to be palmed with gold. "Yes—yes—" their wretched vulpine owners cried, "We will do whatsoever the Son of Aaron asks!"

CHAPTER XXIII

JESUS AND BARABBAS

"Whom will ye that I release unto you?"

When the Robber and the Galilean met in front of the pillared colonnade that divided the two barrackrooms, the contrast was indeed striking. Each was attended by a guard of soldiers.

The man Barabbas was stocky and mighty of thew, hairy-bodied and topped with a shaggy head. The scraggy, bristling beard on his mean face opened around the disfigurement of a square-cut and still suppurating wound. The small eyes, focused to the darkness of the dungeon, squinted at the morning light. . . . His raiment was little more than rags and tatters, leaving the huge torso bare. The stout manacles around his wrists were linked to a heavy chain that fettered his neck and shoulders.

The other prisoner was tall and slender, delicate in his proportions, ascetic in his features, deep-eyed, golden of hair and beard which were

of silken texture; and neither the Crown of Thorns—below which the blood slowly trickled—nor the ancient Purple Robe detracted from His patient majesty.

It was the persecuted Holy One and the robber Outlaw of the Hills that thus strangely met. Yet—though Barabbas started to eye the Nazarene in great contempt—something in that calm look and patient figure shamed him, as the very animal is sometimes shamed by a higher order of being. . . .

Jesus was brought closer to the Procurator's dais; Barabbas, a few steps below on the right. Pilate looked down with disgust on the malefactor; then surveyed the Other, with the entreaty of Proculla still vividly in his mind. . . . Pilate turned to Caiaphas. He framed a question which, in the light of the two prisoners standing there, admitted in his view of but one reply.

"What shall I do then with Jesus who is called the Christ?"

The High Priest's ferocity could not distinguish the gulf of difference that Pilate saw. "Let Him be CRUCIFIED!" cried Caiaphas. "According to our Law, it is expedient that

this one Man"—pointing to Jesus—"should die for the people!"

There was no charity—none whatever—to be hoped from the Priestly party! Yes, the Governor must rely on the effect of the juxtaposition before the multitude.

"Clear the entrance and open the gates!" ordered the Procurator to his legionaries.

He turned his back on Caiaphas, rose and approached the prisoners, signaling them to precede him to the entrance where the guards were already starting to open the doors. . . . Barabbas obeyed the order with reluctance,—for aught he knew, the victims of his murderous forays might be out there, howling for his death. . . . But Jesus walked forward with the mien of One long ago resigned.

Roman soldiers with drawn swords came out on the steps and pushed back the mob. The great bronze gates had been opened with the greatest difficulty, literally jamming the people back. . . . They were overflowing the porticoes and the street, clinging to pillars, perching on the capitals. . . . And now—far across on the opposite balcony—Simeon was still busily distributing bribe-money and lecturing the groups on the "crimes" of Jesus.

Pilate appeared at the head of the steps, between the prisoners. The ruler's arm was upraised in the characteristic Roman salute. He was saying something, and as his arm dropped he swung it across his chest and pointed straight at the figure of Jesus standing at his side. Slightly below him on the other side stood Barabbas.

. . . Poor Magdalene—in the street crowd alongside the staircase, with Martha and Mary of Bethany nearby—could not at first catch the words, but she could see the blood slowly trickling down the persecuted Master's face. . . . Her eyes were ghastly with horror, her hands clasping her temples . . . the gentler Mary shut out the terrible vision as her head fell against Martha's shoulder. . . .

The mob had been only partly quieted by the Ruler's spectacular appearance. Their comparative silence was even more ominous than their previous tumult, for the partisans of Simeon and Annas had been working to the front, and Pilate looked down on a sea of tense and ferocious faces.

"Ye have a custom that I should release unto you a prisoner at the Passover—" began the Governor.

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"HE SAVED OTHERS—HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE!"

Simeon and Annas had descended from the portico, edging nearer with their groups and whispering to them: "In another minute—then shout ye together!"

Pilate pointed first at the Robber and then at the Galilean.

"Which of the Twain will ye that I release unto you—the Evil One, or the Good?" Pilate's tones were thrilling. His hard face seemed to take on a momentary nobility.

"Release unto us the robber Barabbas!" came back the answering roar. Simeon led the shouts. Annas seconded him. One brutish-looking fellow managed to jump up on a step betwixt the guarding legionaries, and tried to attack Jesus with a sword. . . . The soldiers shoved him away. . . . Jesus looked sorrowfully at the would-be killer and then at the fiendish crowd.

Barabbas grinned as the shout told him that the mob was with him, and he might yet win freedom. . . . That harsh face softened, however, as he looked at the sorrowful Saviour, for even he knew full well—even as Pilate knew it—that here beside him stood an innocent Man, about to be unjustly condemned.

The Robber could not fail to feel contempt

for these his deliverers. "Ye fools! ye fools!" he sneered mirthlessly.

Scattered cries of "Crucify Jesus!" "Crucify the Nazarene!" began welling up from the throng, despite the utmost efforts of the few Galilean partisans, among them Mary Magdalene who horror-stricken clapped hands on the mouths of the nearest shouters and gentle Martha and Mary who wildly strove to argue with or appease these ferocious persecutors. . . . A loud, confused clamor of sounds came up to the Ruler.

"Silence!" commanded Pilate. He pointed to Jesus: "Behold the MAN—I have brought Him out to you that ye may know I find no crime in Him!"

A roar of hatred and execration of the poor Victim answered him. Pilate had heard like fury before. His battling with crowds of incensed religionists at Cæsarea Philippi and in Samaria, on two previous occasions, had all but cost him place and power. He must step warily —let *them* adjudge, and take the consequences.

"What then will ye," asked Pilate, "that I do to this Jesus who is called the Christ?"

Caiaphas, at his elbow, hissed the answer: "Let Him be crucified!"

Simeon led the shouting: "Crucify Him!" "Crucify Him!"

"Crucify! crucify!" yelled Annas and his minions. All over the vast assemblage, in every part of which the emissaries of the High Priest had been skilfully placed, rose the raucous cry, while the frenzied mob raised a veritable forest of pleading or minatory hands to their Governor:

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

CHAPTER XXIV

PILATE WASHES HIS HANDS

"See ye to it!"

PILATE pointed to Barabbas.

"Let that man go!" he commanded.

The Centurion gave the Robber a look of positive loathing. He obeyed Pilate's command by letting the prisoner know he was no longer under arrest—then in token, giving him an angry shove down the steps! He followed with two legionaries who knocked off the robber's fetters. . . . The sad mouth of Jesus had tightened as he had heard the savage yells of his blood-thirsty persecutors, but now smiled gently on the freed Barabbas.

Mary Magdalene was down among the people, trying to stop their blood lust. . . . The momentary diversion of interest through the freeing of Barabbas had given her opportunity.

Tall, beautiful, magnetic, making each plea a personal one, reminding those she knew of what they owed to Him,—she was swaying

sentiment throughout a large group by her impassioned speech.

"Rouse from your blind selfishness," cried the Magdalene. "Rescue this just Man! His only crimes have been to heal your sick and raise your dead—Save Him,—SAVE HIM!"

Alas! the bigot Simeon came alongside of her and found means of stopping her. It was the voice of Temple authority that he upraised, the awe of the Priests, while at the same time he poured scorn and obloquy upon the speaker.

"Heed her not!" shouted Simeon angrily. "For she is a sinner and an outcast. Would ye listen to the Harlot of Magdala against the word of your own priests?"

The shot told. The women began to shrink back from Mary, the men began to jeer, and Simeon incited his supporters to push Mary out of the scene. "Away with this woman!" called a number of voices. A concerted rush of partisans drove her forth and she disappeared among the milling throngs.

The pudgy finger of Caiaphas indicated to the Procurator the growing menace of the mob, hungry for Jesus' death.

"Shall I crucify your King?" asked Pilate ironically.

"We have no king but Cæsar," answered the High Priest. "Away with this Usurper!"

Pilate took the measure of the Prosecutor. Looking at the man steadily as if boring into his very soul, he knew that the loyalistic pretense was false, and he knew that Caiaphas hated Rome. And yet—and yet!

The High Priest held the whip hand. By that mob down there, he could rock the Procurator's authority to its foundations. . . . Sedition, once fomented, could be stopped only by massacre, if at all! Tiberius—and Sejanus—would not tolerate such another quarrel. . . . Pilate lowered his eyes, then turned away, and looked at Jesus. . . . "Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee or to release Thee?" he asked.

"Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from ABOVE!" replied Jesus. He was gazing at Pilate with that sad and patient majesty of His, in which was no trace of personal reproach. Indeed his next words were kindly.

"He that delivered Me unto thee—" indicating Caiaphas "—hath the greater Sin!"

Pilate clenched his hands in despair of his vain attempt at handling this Man! He would

neither deny His spiritual Kingdom nor say aught in extenuation of His offence to the Priests. Meantime the swelling uproar from below rose higher and higher:—"Away with Him! Crucify Him!" That sea of faces was distorted with passion and hate. The few supporters of Jesus—even the gentle, outcrying Martha and Mary—had all been driven away.

The Mob Beast spoke, nor would it be balked of its prey.

The Governor asked a servant to fetch water. He dipped his hands in the basin, then washed each hand with the other as if to remove the stains of blood . . . and he looked down at the multitude throughout this ceremonial act.

"I am innocent of the blood of this righteous Man," he announced solemnly. "See ye to it!"

With a gesture he turned back to the throne, folded his toga around him, and sat down—while the legionaries again surrounded Jesus to take Him away to be crucified. There was a grin of triumph on Caiaphas' face, and his emissaries quickly carried the word to the very outskirts of the crowd that Pilate had bowed to the popular verdict. . . . With savage shouts these tormentors awaited with glee the ordeal of the Way to the Cross.

As Caiaphas and his Elders passed through the Judgment Hall, there approached them the stricken Judas, bearing in his right hand the black money bag.

Caiaphas was supercilious. He turned a questioning look to Simeon (who had now rejoined him) and then back to Judas, who held the purse before him and tried to thrust it in the hand of the High Priest.

"I have sinned," muttered Judas brokenly, "in—that—I—have—betrayed—i n n o c e n t—blood!"

Caiaphas, placing his hands behind him, gazed at the broken figure with cruel, mocking irony. "What is that to us!" he replied harshly. "See thou to it."

The desperate Betrayer begged Simeon and the others to take back the price of his shame. They all looked at him stonily or turned from him with averted backs and shoulders. In sheer despair, at last, Judas raised his hands to high heaven—the bag, now bottom upward, dropping its Thirty Pieces of Silver clattering to the floor. . . . In agony and uncertainty he looked wildly around. Caiaphas and the Elders had gone. His eye fell on a length of rope that had been used to bind the hands of Jesus. He

picked it up, gazed at it—till a tragic thought that occurred to him in connection with the rope, sent him fleeing with the cords clutched tightly in his hands!

The legionaries were disrobing the condemned Prisoner on the front steps. His purple robe was taken off, and they put His own white robe around Him. Below, the executioners had brought the Cross which they upraised to an almost vertical position, making it plainly visible to all,—so that His tormentors could flock around the bottom and jeer and exult over their coming orgy: the spectacle of a frail and delicate Man bearing o'er hill and dale this lumbering instrument of His own death.

Judas saw the Cross too, on his way out. Throwing his cloak over his head in horror, the Fury-haunted man ran back through the opening of the great grill doors.

CHAPTER XXV

VIA DOLOROSA

"Lo, He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, and by His stripes we are healed."

WHAT the "worship of sorrow" has immortalized these nineteen hundred years under the name of Via Dolorosa, is to-day a congeries or a succession of many little streets with tortuous twistings and turnings, finally leading out of the City by steep ascent to the Hill of Calvary and its ancient Execution Ground or "place of skulls." The so-called Street of David is only a part of the terrible way.

The tall heavy beams used as the verticals of crosses weighed a hundred-weight or more; and when to the upper part of each was fitted an equally stout cross beam of seven-foot span, it was as much as a heavily muscled athlete could do to drag one along for any considerable distance.

The crowd thirsting for Jesus' death wanted no detail of ignominy to be omitted, and among

these was the custom that the prisoner should bear his Cross, even from the Judgment Hall to the place of execution. The legal system of that era allowed no interval twixt sentence and punishment; no hope of pardon or reprieve; no last creature comforts, and no consolations of religion. Jeers and scoffs—often kicks and blows—accompanied the o'erlaboring victim to his last agony. . . .

On this high day two thieves were to suffer the death penalty alongside the Man of Sorrows. The custom with ordinary malefactors such as these, was somewhat different. . . . They bore only the transverse beams of their Crosses which were fastened to the back of the neck and shoulders, and to the extended arms by ropes. . . . Dysmas was the name of one, and Gestas of the other.

But before the chief Victim lay the terrible immediate task of shouldering His gallows and dragging it, bumping its end and pounding Him at almost every step, o'er the mile or more of the twisting maze of streets and up the steep hill. . . . The Passover crowds had made the occasion of the Death March a kind of festival, for there was not then the horror of cruel spectacle that prevails to-day and all classes of

society went out to see the gallows processions and the executions.

The streets, alleys and side streets were packed. Men and women at seraglio windows or in niches at street corners sat eagerly waiting for the pathetic parade. Vendors hawked their sweetmeats at the plazas, merchants found quickened trade at their adjoining bazaars. . . . The little children joined the festivity, and even the dogs of Jerusalem ran in and out among the marchers, hunting scraps of offal from the food being eaten by the bystanders.

Only the stout military authority of the escorting troops exerted to the utmost, could keep the milling mobs of spectators and the excited accompaniers and followers of the procession from swarming over and overwhelming it.

Some—of Jesus's diminishing party—bowed low or knelt in reverence. The most—malignant black-bearded men or venomous-eyed cowled matrons—clenched their fists at Him, and uttered curses and reproaches.

First the legionaries, headed by the first Centurion, cleared the way. Behind them came the Cross-bearer Who cried aloud as He looked

back to the City of His beloved Dream-Kingdom of the spiritual:

"O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! How *often* would I have gathered thy children together—and ye would not!"

Behind Him walked His executioners, armed with whips. They were there to see that He did not stop,—to scourge Him forward should He falter!

Followed a herald on a white horse. . . . He was alternately blowing on a trumpet, then announcing to all and sundry in stentorian tones:

"JESUS, A REBEL AND ENEMY OF THE LAW, TO BE CRUCIFIED! HE PRETENDETH TO BE THE KING OF ISRAEL!"

Next came the two thieves, a fair mark for those who had armed themselves with rotten fruit and vegetables. Besides this ruffianly class, the citizens who had suffered personally from the depredations of Gestas or Dysmas, came provided with stout sticks or stones.

They attacked vigorously. The men could not defend themselves except by striking out with their feet. . . . A robbed rug-dealer nearly murdered Gestas. . . . The thief, naked

save as to loin-cloth, his arms and shoulders spread by the Crossbeam, saved himself by butting and kicking; all the while, his face was distorted by maniacal fury, and he was hurling obscene epithets at his persecutor! Dysmas, a bigger man and heavily bearded, stood the pelting more stolidly.

The procession was turning the corner, which had given the attackers a better opportunity. . . . The legionaries saw that the diversion, if continued, might stop it. . . . They cared nothing for the thieves' sufferings, but to keep things moving, charged and scattered the crowd.

Ahead the poor Cross-bearer was stumbling o'er the rough cobblestones with which this part of the Way was paved. The burden was indeed greater than He could bear! His face had the wan look of the mentally and physically exhausted.

A homely middle-aged Mother ran alongside Him, putting forward toward Him with her extended arms a frail, wasting Baby. . . . "Master, I beg Thee, heal it!" she cried.

Healing from Him Who walked in Death's shadow.

Strength of new Life from that almost faint-

ing Sufferer! What strength had He to give her—what healing to impart?

The wan, spent face managed a ghost of a smile of pity. A Hand momentarily left the Crossbeam, and two fingers were raised above the Babe's head!

Hated and tortured by men, He had still somewhat of His precious gift of Divine vitality to bestow. . . . The child stirred in its Mother's arms. . . . The thin lineaments filled and rounded to beauty. . . . The Babe kicked and crowed. . . . Joyful, the Mother thanked its Saviour, and not even the rudeness of the legionaries who rudely pushed her off the roadway, could alter that look of grateful ecstasy.

Behind the procession of criminals—and at a considerable interval—walked the High Priest. In front of Him marched a row of legionaries; behind him, the solemn row of the Elders of the Sanhedrin. The priestly faction on each side of the Road were bowing low in reverence. Those who knew Caiaphas—and what follower of the Temple did not—took the pleasure of sharing his triumph. Rome had yielded—his "enemy" was the public mock, would soon die for the purging of the priestly Temple! A bearded burgher—ally of the San-

hedral party—pointed jeeringly to the suffering Jesus up where the procession was turning another corner and going up a flight of steps through an archway.

Up those terrible steps Jesus was finding the burden of the Cross heavier and heavier. The cruel impact of the timbers had worn through the robe, leaving the upper part of His body exposed, and dripping with perspiration and blood. . . . The executioner with his whip scourged Him on.

. . . John and Mary Mother watched from a doorway. From an arch, Peter, Simon, Matthew and James saw Jesus pass. . . . Peter raged. James bowed his head on his breast. It was all over! Naught they might do, could possibly prevail against those serried pikes and lances of Rome, against the virulent hate of the thousands of hirelings of the Temple who had come out in support of Caiaphas, Simeon, Annas and the Elders to see that every formality and ignominy of the execution should be carried out! The Disciples bent in prayer.

A woman of the upper classes, much bejeweled and wearing a richly figured cloak, pushed her way through the throng, seeking the head of the procession.

She knelt on the dirty pavement; and as the Burden-bearer and the bumping Cross came slowly, painfully up the street, prostrated herself and crawled to the feet of the exhausted Sufferer. She kissed the hem of his trailing garment, begged: "Master, Thy blessing will cure me of an Issue!" . . . Again, that soft fingered benediction . . . and the Woman rose —her face glowing serenely with joy at accomplishment of the Miracle. . . . The Cross almost crushed her as it passed.

An aged cripple ventured to ask a boon, and he too was cured. . . . The benison of the suffering Master enabled him to throw away his crutches. . . . For his few remaining years he would ever tell—even as he was telling his friends in the doorway now—that Jesus had made him whole!

Only, for one tortured one there was no healing! Faith had never been his. Bitter remorse pricked him now. He saw Jesus almost bent double by the weight of the Cross,—staggering as if every step would be his last.

With a loud cry the tortured one darted into an archway and buried his face in his arms. The man carried in his right hand a loose coil of rope.

Horror-stricken at the extreme exhaustion of Jesus, another bystander—Mary Magdalene—sought that doorway, too. At first bowing her head in despair and then looking up, she saw Judas.

The man she had once loved with the only disinterested affection of her worldly days! The man who had betrayed her Master. . . . Mary choked with sobs. . . . She clutched at him to tell him of his immortal infamy; pointing yonder to his suffering Victim.

But Judas knew her not. . . . The horror of it—the fruit of his ill-doing—overwhelmed all else. . . . He must see that sight again, live the blood and tears and agony of it, before . . . before . . .

Judas clutched the rope coil more tightly in his hand.

CHAPTER XXVI

SIMON OF CYRENE

"I will bear Thy Cross!"

"Look—oh, look!" cried a mourner for the Master, from her elevated seat in a niche, where she had been beating her bosom to the measured march of the legionaries—

"Look, they're stopping the procession!"

"Why, it's a little boy!" exclaimed her companion who was rending strips of cloth, in another Oriental mourning rite.

The women—who were Martha and Mary of Bethany—suddenly experienced a wild thrill of hope that the Master might be rescued. . . .

It was the chief Centurion—Quirilus Cornelius—who first saw the queer sight. He pointed it out to his legionaries, and they grinned.

The tiny stature and defiantly waved sword of his adversary—standing confronting them in the road—caused the Centurion to shake with

laughter. He turned to his men again, his eyes still twinkling, and they all laughed.

Commingled with his mirth was a slowly growing puzzlement, together with a kindliness to the small boy who, for some reason or other, wanted to be the soldier of the Lord!

The young lad was coming toward them now. . . . He was wielding a sword that better would have suited a giant. . . . He was trying to be stern and grownup-like, but evidently he was strongly under the influence of some emotion. . . . The solid rows of legionaries with their pikes upraised abashed him not, nor did he seem to be dismayed by fear of the tall Centurion who met him with full panoply of lance, shield and buckler. . . . Highly amused, the men awaited the issue.

The child waved his sword against the legionaries. His little clenched fist struck at the Commander's breastplate. He was sobbing in his boy-like wrath.

"Let my friend go," he cried. "He has done no harm to any of you!" Tears coursed down the little cheeks.

The officer brought his right arm around the lad and gripped the sword wrist.

With his other hand he pushed back the small

clenched fist, and removed the sword from the right hand's inert grasp. The boy sobbed again but now from a sense of his pitiful weakness. His head almost lay against the shoulder of the big man he was to "fight."

The Centurion wanted to hug him to his breast. . . . Yet had not he—Quirilus Cornelius —received the imperative order:

"— lead the prisoner to the place of execution, forbidding all persons, rich or poor, to prevent the death of Jesus." . . .

This little friend of the Man who had looked at him so understandingly, affected him strangely. . . . Queer, that the Martyr—a "rebel", the people said—could so win a little child. Moisture came to the Centurion's eyes. . . . It was a kindly shove that the Centurion gave to the little fellow in the direction of the roadside and his freedom, after throwing away the sword he had wielded.

"March on!" said the officer to his men gruffly.

Jesus had fallen in the roadway. He had seen the little boy's act, and a wan smile of sympathy lighted His drawn face. . . . Then He lowered His head, His strength failed Him utterly, and He sank to the ground, the tall

Cross alongside Him, and the transverse beam pressing down on His neck and shoulders. . . . The fellow on the other side of the Cross and back of Him cursed fluently. . . . He started to lash Jesus. . . .

Meantime the lad was propelled almost into the arms of a powerful peasant, one Simon of Cyrene.

The countryman owned a produce wagon and a team of water buffaloes, but he had let work stop and given his harnessed cattle a rest whilst he gaped and stared, watching the highly novel and thrilling spectacle of a gallows procession. . . . The child was crying, and instinctively Simon protected him.

"They're going to whip Him," he sobbed. "Jesus, I mean—my Master! That other Centurion is kicking out at something or other—but I can't just see what he's doing!"

The countryman lifted the little fellow to the broad back of a placid water buffalo.

"I can see now—Oh! oh! oh! they'll kill Jesus because He can't stand up and drag His Cross—" he wailed.

"Who are you—and who is that Man?" asked the peasant.

"I'm Mark and He's my Master, the best and

greatest Man that ever lived! He saved me from being a cripple all my life. And see that sword, down on the roadway? It was Peter's sword, but I got it after the Levite threw it away.

"I wish I could die for Him," said little Mark fervently. "Only, the Centurion bested me and pushed me away—he was so big and I was so little!"

The boy sobbed again, his little fist clenched as he pointed to Simon where the huge fellow with the lash was bringing it down with heavy flail-like strokes on the poor scarred back.

"If I were as big as you," he wailed piteously to Simon, "I'd help Him lift His cross."

Comforting the boy's sorrow, the countryman stepped over to where Jesus lay. . . . The scourger had delivered four powerful strokes, but so exhausted was the Victim that there was no response. Inert, the burden-bearer lay with his head pressing against the Cross-beam and his fingers extended along the vertical.

"Swish!" sounded the scourger's whip for the fifth time.

Simon caught his arm. With his great strength he handled the legionary easily. The

countryman motioned to the men that further beating was unnecessary. . . .

Simon bent over Jesus and gave a friendly hand. "I will bear Thy Cross for Thee!" he said gently. He pulled the great timber sideways off Jesus' shoulder and enabled him to rise, taking him by both shoulders.

Then Simon addressed himself to his new task. The situation was a difficult one, as the beam was headed up a somewhat steep ascent. With all his strength, the Cross could not be budged by leverage from below. . . . It was no wonder the frail Jesus, once fallen, could not rise with it. . . . Simon slowly dragged the huge timber over towards a wall. He then pulled it up with all his might, gaining the support of the wall as he spelled himself, and finally got his stalwart shoulder under the junction of vertical and crosspiece—tested its weight—tugged—and went up the difficult roadway bearing the Lord's cross. . . .

The bystanders at the roadway—those at least who possessed the instincts of common humanity—shouted their joy and approval of the noble act. But the party of Caiaphas glowered and frowned that the Offender was not to carry out the full and extreme weight

of his sentence. . . . Behind the Cross borne by Simon and following the pathetic figure of Jesus walking alongside it, the three Marys and the other holy women of that sad day trailed the emblem of their beloved Master's supreme sacrifice, even to the brow of the Hill of Calvary, the place called Golgotha, where before night three crosses with the blood of their human victims were to redden the sky.

CHAPTER XXVII

JUDAS—GESTAS—DYSMAS

"With Him they crucified two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left."

THE three condemned were secured—side by side—to the three crosses which were upraised at the very summit of the Hill.

Gestas went first; then Dysmas. . . .

Finally—Jesus, upon the tallest cross, in the centre between them.

Judas found a perch on the opposite hillside from which every move on Golgotha was outlined against the noon-day sky. The crazed man, bearing his rope, clambered up to a footing among the rocks, a few square yards of earth whence rose—gnarled and black—an aged tree, the largest branch of which projected over a ravine. . . . Judas threw his coil over this limb.

Clang! Clang! Clang! They were driving in the nails! Judas shut his ears to the sound. Each nail tore at his heart. He lifted his eyes

to stare at the stark, almost naked tree above him. . . . He approached the edge of the precipice; he touched the bare limb abutting thereover,—Judas gazed down from it to the coil of rope!

Gestas screamed with pain as the executioners drove the iron through each forestep into the heavy wood. He was stripped save for a loin cloth. His arms were bound to the cross-beam which he had carried and which was fitted and fastened to the upper part of the vertical. To secure the malefactor still more surely, a nail was driven through the palm of each hand into each extending arm of the cross. A supporting wooden peg or sedule, under the crotch of the Thief, kept the body from sagging down. . . .

Whilst the wretched victim howled and cursed, the gibbet bearing him was raised.

When it stood fairly vertical, it was slipped into its post hole, secured by heavy stones and the driving of side stakes and wedges.

Dysmas went in similar fashion, stripped, nailed, bound as to the arms, then the gibbet upraised, and firmly wedged in its post hole—but Dysmas did not rave nor shriek. His stockier frame and iron will withstood the tor-

ture though his features were contorted by pain. . . .

But what of the delicately fashioned tall slender Figure—now revealed by His stripping—Who was destined to be the protagonist of this cruel holiday, and to see Whom all parties and factions had come out to the Place of Skulls?

Priests and scribes and Pharisees were there, exulting in their triumph; the coarse dregs of the populace who loved an execution as a good Show; bitterly mourning Hebrews of the better sort, aghast at the catastrophe; the sad partisans of Jesus: John, supporting Mary the Mother, and followed by the other holy women!

Theirs—these last—the mental agony that cried out with each brutishness of the executioner—with each blow of the hammer driving nails through His palms and feet—with each jerk and shake of the Cross, cruelly rending His transfixed members! John hid the sight from the Crucified's Mother, drawing up his cloak before her. She was sick and faint, and seemed about to swoon. . . . The Magdalene and the sisters of Lazarus and the others who so deeply loved the Master, saw it all with sometimes a mute and sometimes a wailing despair. . . . It

was not only their unquenchable grief for the Friend, but the black ruin of all their hopes of His beloved Ministry, so it seemed to them as they gazed at the silent Sufferer. . . . Scarcely a moan had escaped His lips at the torture. . . . He hung there, ghastly, wounded, bleeding, only His drawn face and tense muscles revealing the inner agony.

With a sob the man at the head of the ravine turned and threw himself against the massy trunk of the old tree, with his arms flung around it in the complete abandonment of his remorse.

"Mary, Mary Magdalene!" he cried, invoking the absent image of the woman who would have saved him, "why did I not heed thee?"

His head slowly lifted until he could see—now for the last time—the pendant figure of the Man of Calvary on the Cross! With fixed resolve he rose to his feet. . . .

He noosed the rope around his neck, then flung the other end around the gnarled limb over the precipice and fastened it. . . .

"There is no hope for me!" cried Judas. "No hope here or hereafter—for I have crucified my GOD"—and he leaped into space. . . .

"Ish Maveth! Ish Maveth!"

The Hebrew dirge bewailing the death fate of Jesus and punctuated by beating of breasts and rending of sack-cloth, rose o'er the Mount of Calvary, a dreadful chant from sympathizing onlookers. It was half drowned by the jeerings of priests and the mockeries of the soldiers. . . . Dark clouds began to obscure the gleaming sunshine of the early afternoon of Passover Eve.

There was a bustle and milling of the disorganized crowds as way was cleared for the approach of the official authorities. . . . The soldiers, mounting ladders, had tacked the ignominious placards above the heads of Gestas and Dysmas. As the legionaries passed them on the ladders, the men agonizingly cried out for drink. . . .

A legionary, holding a spear topped with a wetted sponge, approached the three Crosses. He held it up to each in turn. First Gestas, and then Dysmas, eagerly sucked the wine and myrrh. . . . But the third Man refused the proffer. He closed His mouth, gently shaking His head. . . .

When Pilate arrived at Golgotha, he brought with him, carried by his secretary, the placard or *titulus* of Jesus.

Before it could be taken up and nailed, Caiaphas—accompanied by the Chief Priests—arrived, and viewed it with growing anger. The placard was written in three languages and read:

THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH,
THE KING OF THE JEWS!

The High Priest gestured angrily to the Governor. He complained that the Romans gave the condemned the very title on account of which the indictment was framed, mocking the verdict of the Sanhedrin. "Write not, the King of the Jews," demanded Caiaphas, "but that he said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" The High Priest was furious.

"What I have written, I have written!" came the peremptory answer of Pilate. He refused to change the record he had made that morning at the Praetorium, from which the *titulus* was taken. For he had decreed this execution not indeed to feed the full grudge of Caiaphas, but to quell (as he believed) an incipient sedition. Little he worried how it would hurt the Temple's pride! Let them have their King, gibbeted, nail-pierced, agonizing. . . .

The soldiers were just finishing the dividing

of Jesus' garments among them and casting lots for His seamless coat (which could not be divided without destroying it) when Pilate's order came to affix the *titulus*. . . . Poor Mark, a sobbing little observer of the tragic scene, asked and obtained from them the boon of one of the muddy, rock-scarred sandals.

"Ha! Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days,—save Thyself, come down from the Cross!"

It was the jeering cry of a partisan of the Temple who climbed halfway up the ladder behind the soldier affixing the placard, and yelled it with foaming mouth and clenched fist in the Sufferer's face!

Caiaphas caught up the cry and gave full vent to his outraged scorn. "If He be the King of Israel," mocked the High Priest savagely, "let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him!" A roar of Sanhedral laughter greeted this remark, which was accompanied by a sneer and a wagging forefinger.

Further away, an under-priest mocked the gibbeted Figure before a group of women, pointing up to Him and saying:

"He saved others—Himself He cannot save!"

But one follower of Jesus—Mary Magdalene—stood her ground, replying with intense feeling:

"What does it matter whether He saves himself or not, when He has *saved the world?*"

Vainly the Levite tried to drive her off. . . . She began to sway some of the nearby women onlookers to the Cause.

Jesus, even though in agony, heard all the gibes and taunts and mockeries. . . . It seemed as if heaven itself were making cause with Him against these cruel men. The sky darkened yet more. Black clouds piled up higher, shutting out the face of the sun. . . . And in that moment Jesus, looking up into the blackening sky, voiced this world's highest touch of the Divine, in the prayer that He brokenly uttered with head upraised toward the Source of Light and Goodness:

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!"

The Mother of Gestas was watching the last suffering of her son. She was poor, shabby, and unkempt. Tears made little rivulets down her cheeks. She could think of nothing but his agony and her sorrow till through her tears she saw a beautiful, spiritual-looking Woman go to

the central Cross and cling to it piteously.

The two women spoke to one another. "I am the mother of Gestas," said the unkempt one. "I am the mother of Jesus," said the woman at the foot of the middle Cross,—and at the other's sobbing, Mary the Mother, oblivious of her own terrible grief, took the poor old woman in her arms, holding the unkempt head tightly against her breast.

The shrieks and ravings of Gestas—the son of the shabby woman—became even more obscene and terrible. He had heard, even as on the Via Dolorosa, the gibes and taunts of the spectators who of their own experience recalled his spoliations. He cursed them vividly in his agony, and then turned his head to the suspended Figure on his right, voicing a venom that was even more acute than to his enemies, since wickedness hates goodness: worst of all!

The eyes of Gestas fairly bulged out of their sockets. He twisted and writhed on his narrow sedule. He forgot, and tried to move his hands and feet—then screamed with pain, His venom and contempt toward the Divine Sufferer triumphed over his agony—he cursed, spat and shouted:

"If Thou be the Christ, I say, save Thyself and us!"

Jesus answered him not. . . .

But Dysmas had heard the sneer, and it was the first word that caused him to break his stoical silence. The man was of a type not unlike Barabbas if less bestial: powerful of vitality, strong of will, a spark of goodness waiting to be kindled within that heaving breast and towsled, shaggy head! He frowned at the other and reproved him.

"Dost thou not fear God?" asked the second Thief, calling across to Gestas, "seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds—but *this Man*"—his voice rose to a high note of assurance—"*This Man hath done nothing amiss!*"

The iron stoicism of Dysmas was breaking now. Words seemed to choke in his breast through the overmastering of his deep emotion. He gazed at the hanging Nazarene with the eyes of faith. At last—leaning his head toward Jesus as close as he could—he cried:

"Lord—remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!"

For the first and perhaps the last time in the

Crucifixion agony, a glorious tenderness lit up the suspended Sufferer's wan features.

He nodded toward Dysmas and spoke. Spoke softly, tenderly, just as in his Divine Ministry he had comforted even the little ones—

"Verily I say unto thee—To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise. . . ."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE WORLD'S TRAGEDY

"Verily, this was the Son of God!"

The Divinity of the Man who could think of others in his sufferings! Who blessed the faithful little Mark hugging His sandal as he sobbed, and Mary Magdalene who comforted the child! Who fulfilled the sacred obligation of a Son, even in the hour of mortal agony!

. . . In the essential unity of the Jewish family, none of the womenfolk could be left without a protector. Care of the widowed or orphaned or the mother bereaved, rested with the household's male head or with an adoptive guardian, because it was not thought meet that a woman should make her way alone. . . .

The face of Jesus had grown tired and drawn. The body was congested by impeded circulation due both to the scourging and to the unnatural hanging position. His head and rigid limbs ached unbearably. Fever like a fire raged in His veins! But He remembered His

Mother at the foot of the Cross, and His beloved disciple John standing beside her, and looking down very slowly, He attempted a wan smile and said:

"Woman—behold thy Son!"

The Mother at hearing Jesus's words almost fainted. But John took a strong step toward her, and saved her lovingly from falling. . . . Even the shabby mother of the obscene Thief up yonder on the right, tried pathetically to pat her hand. . . .

The eyes of the Nazarene grew very sad as He viewed the Madonna's terrible grief. . . . With a deep sigh He turned His head a little from her, and looked down directly on His follower who was supporting her, and said:

"John—behold thy Mother!"

Two sentences—eight words—how exquisitely brief and holy—uttered with the greatest difficulty—giving the Mother a home and protection! . . . John never forgot them. . . . "From that hour," says Scripture simply, "that Disciple took her into his home."

The brief exchange twixt the Sufferer on the Cross and His followers below had been observed by two of the soldiers. They started to drive John and Mary away. The legionaries

were stopped peremptorily by their Centurion. . . .

For Quirilus Cornelius had seen and heard what all the power and solemnity of his pagan credo could not bring to pass—

The Divine goodness of a patient, unresisting martyr forgiving His enemies—blessing the penitence of Dysmas—comforting the little boy and the Magdalene—finding a son for His despairing Mother! . . .

"Let them be," ordered Quirilus, "for they are doing no hurt!"

"Now from the Sixth Hour there was darkness over all the land until the Ninth Hour."

The world's greatest tragedy was drawing to a close, and the wild climax was set in utter darkness of Eclipse for the convulsion of earth and heaven. Shall we call it miracle or coincidence, does not matter to our view of the wondrous Divinity of the Man and our lowly abashed reverence before the spectacle of martyred Goodness! For the officials of two great races and some of their peoples were completing a most monstrous and infamous deed, and it was fitting that all the angry elements and powers of Nature shriek protest!

The sun was blotted out. Boreas whistled from the north. The lightning flashed intermittently. As the blasts grew stronger, they shook even the firmly planted Crosses and cut the bodies of the Crucified like whips. A death-like chilly stillness succeeded the advance portents of the hurricane. For many minutes the menace of the Storm lay suspended over the area. . . . And when it came, it descended in savage fire and flood, and with it, earthquake and disaster!

The heart of the Man of Nazareth was breaking. . . .

"It is finished!" cried Jesus in a loud voice.

His eyes sought the wild tumult of the skies before He bent His head in the death groan. "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit!" He had cried. These were His last words.

The Centurion had heard them, as had all who were not so storm-stricken as to be running helter-skelter, pell-mell down the Hill of Calvary. An intuition flashed like one of the very lightning strokes of Heaven's convulsion on this pagan's soul; an unwonted tenderness brought tears to his eyes, with a conviction of his own sin, and the holiness of the Man he had crucified. . . .

"Truly," said the Centurion to his soldiers, "*this was the Son of God!*" His voice had almost the quality of a ghost-whisper amid that wild scene.

> "*And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened—*"

The people were running down from Golgotha in all directions, shouting and objurgating with fear, trampling on one another, falling bruised and maimed by the hidden obstructions in the dark—yet downward ever resistlessly moved by the awful trembling of the ground, then with heightened panic as the earth broke and seamed under their feet. Heaven's booming artillery, and the torrents of rain, added to their horrors. . . . For off, the twinkling lights of Jerusalem gave direction to their flight. . . . And there—in the Holy Place, high upon the topmost terrace of the Temple—frightened under-priests saw the Veil or great closure of the Holy of Holies break in two with the earthquake shock, and they cried:

"Jehovah is wroth! What have the people done?"

But the bitterness of Caiaphas withstood the wrack and the temblor.

Standing there on Golgotha, undaunted by Nature's portents—unaware of the devastation of God's house in Jerusalem—he mocked the pitiful "temple of the body" hanging on the central Cross above. . . . "Trusted in God, did He?" scorned Caiaphas. "Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God!' "

A flash of lightning lit up the grisly scene. . . . It showed the dead Jesus with the head sunk on the breast. . . .

These cataclysmic disturbances caused a wild panic among the people who ran frantically in all directions. Some of them looked like veritable ghosts from the quake-opened graves. . . . As Caiaphas and Simeon and the few remaining Elders started to go, the people wildly rushing back o'er the quaking ground, and the earth then opening up in an awful fissure at their very feet, forced back the priestly group toward the Cross.

Was it a poor spent fleeing Dove—or a white ball of lightning in its image—that seemed to rest momentarily on the summit of the gallows? . . . Caiaphas and his men shuddered a second

time as a lightning flash yet again revealed a huddled group of the faithful clinging to the base of the gibbet, a veritable Rock of Ages to storm-tossed souls!

The scared, gesticulating priests seemed like dreadful werewitches, with their sacerdotal robes wildly flaunting and careering in the hurricane blast. . . . Some of the folk thereabout were tumbling into crevices of the earth. . . . Others were rolling about like flotsam and jetsam on the ocean. . . . The darkness and confusion and terrific windstorm made any kind of progress difficult. . . . Caiaphas and his followers frenziedly sought safety.

Moans, wails and prayers—shrill outcries—rose now and again above the voice of the tornado. A woman stumbled and fell to her knees; throwing out her arms to the black sky, she cried desperately:

"Oh, God—give us back the Light!"

As if in miraculous answer to her prayer, the black clouds were seen to part in the centre.

A gigantic beam of Light through the rift—the last visible ray of the westering Sun on that dreadful black Friday—struck down from Heaven, illuminating in beautiful sunshine the face and figure of the dead Saviour.

CHAPTER XXIX

VISION SEEN BY THE MARYS

"Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

Immediately on his return to the Temple, Caiaphas sought the Holy Place where his affrighted ministers told him a disaster had occurred. The proud priest was shaken by agitation. He could no longer think well of his handiwork, accompanied as it was by the wrath of Heaven. But he was not prepared for the further happening.

As the troubled High Priest was about to enter the sanctuary, a vivid bolt of lightning came down through the roof and crashed the rent Veil of the Holy of Holies to pieces!

With a great cry Caiaphas fell back, transfixed with fear, against the side wall. His hands shook with palsy and his lips gibbered. He tried to reach forward and touch the rent Veil—found himself powerless to make the motion!

In his mind's eye—or was it in another terrible flash of lightning visible through the portal—he beheld the three terrible Crosses on Golgotha's sky,—then blackness again, and despair. He sank down before the piled up Veil, and petitioned the irate Majesty of the shrine.

"O Lord God, Jehovah!" begged the stricken Priest, "visit not Thy wrath upon Thy people Israel, but upon Me!"

. . . Another terrible thunderbolt and another lightning flash revealed his huddled, abject figure, with arms upraised and garments wildly blowing. . . .

"For I was filled with envy of Him—and persuaded the people to crucify Him. . . ."

Remorse filled every fibre of his being. Deep down in the heart of this Inquisitor was the feeling that he—God's agent—had betrayed his trust. . . . He had misrepresented Jewry, covered it with shame and calumny that might be unjustly handed down to unborn generations! . . . And this shame—the world's unjust reproach—the remorseful Caiaphas would spare that Chosen People, his co-religionists, if he could.

"O God of Israel, pity Israel!" was the plea

of Caiaphas. "Thy pity unto me I do not ask, for I have butchered pity!"

. . . He rocked back and forth in agonized Oriental wailing and lamentation until a merciful syncope blotted his terrible visions of the Judgment Hall, the Way of Sorrows, and Calvary.

Who shall say? Were others of his party equally touched? We know not. He alone had access to the shrine of the Shekinah, he alone had communed with its angry Majesty in that dread hour.—But measures were presently afoot, inaugurated by his lieutenants, to secure the entombment of Jesus after Joseph of Arimathea had begged the body from Pilate and tenderly wrapped in a fine linen cloth, laid it away in his own new rock tomb.

"So the Chief Priests and Pharisees went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch—lest His disciples should come by night and steal Him away."

The faithful followers had been invited by the donor of the tomb to assist in the last loving rites of sepulture. The Magdalene and Martha and Mary of Bethany bore precious

ointments and strips of linen for swathing bandages. The loving duty softened the sorrow though it could not still the almost intolerable heartache. The three women were the last persons to come out of the exit, then Joseph and certain of Jesus's followers,—with little Mark tugging too—rolled the great stone across the opening.

The burial party departed, but little Mark ran and hid behind a tree just as Simeon and a group of the Watch came to the spot. The men were carrying torches, as it was the ghostly hour before dawn. They bore also the various paraphernalia used for sealing the tomb.

Mark could see them now—in the flickering torch flares—tying the stone with ropes which they knotted carefully; others heating the wax in the flame of their torches.

Simeon carried the large and imposing seal of the Sanhedrin. He impressed the shape of it firmly on the hot wax daubed over the rope-knots. Disposing the Watch around the tomb so that no one could possibly violate it, Simeon solemnly went his way. . . .

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the First Day of the week, came

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And . . . the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the sepulchre, and sat upon it."

The watching legionaries slept. . . . Before the dawn, great waves of opalescent light from overhead began to flood the dark gray morning clouds and descend to earth. . . . The waves of light struck squarely the door of the tomb and the stone.

The stone, in the shaft of light, began to move and roll. It broke the seals and tore the ropes.

The men of the Watch suddenly awoke. . . . They saw with great affright the portent of the slipping stone. . . . It was now blinding light! . . . *"The keepers became as dead men,"* they collapsed to the ground as they saw the stone moving and at the same moment were blinded by the dazzling radiance. . . .

In that blessed radiance the tomb itself lost distinguishing outlines, it seemed to dissolve into the peaceful, radiant face and figure of the risen Jesus!

Flowing white—almost transparent—in His glory He stepped forth; blessed the Watch now lulled in syncope, and went out into the garden,

whilst the glory illuminating the tomb dimmed and faded, and again the door of it—and the great removed stone lying thereby—might have been seen by any person passing by.

It was the two Marys who first saw the place where the Lord lay; the Magdalene scared and mystified by the broken seal and coverings, the linen trappings lying there, and the napkin that had bound His head; but the Other quieter, more subdued, filled with a growing sense of serene peace and joy that the Man her Son must indeed live again!

Was it the voice of an angel they really heard by physical audition, or was it that equally potent music of the inner ear that brought them that wonderful word: "He is risen from the dead!"

Heaven's wings of opalescent light seemed to form it in golden letters: *"He Is Risen!"* The birds on the bough of the Easter blossoming fruit tree, seemed to be caroling out their very hearts in rapture:

"HE IS RISEN!"

The Mother was looking toward the tree so that she did not see Him as He approached her—then sensing a presence, she turned and was transfixed by the vision, her hand clutch-

ing her breast as if the heart would fain stop beating!

She did not dare to touch that seeming Flesh of her womb who stood before her: her Son, yet somehow not her Son, so transfigured was He in glowing mantle of light. She could only humbly receive His blessing, rapturously worship Him!

The Magdalene was a litle back of her. . . . She wept as she felt her way out of the opening of the tomb. Her head was bowed. Her long hair was hanging down around her face. As she turned slowly against the edge of the door, leaning on it for support, she buried her face in her arm, weeping bitterly

The risen Lord was walking slowly in her direction. He spoke to her whilst she was still ignorant of His coming and utterly buried in her grief.

"Woman, why weepest thou?" asked Jesus gently. "Whom seekest thou?"

She thought it was the gardener addressing her.

"Sir," she said piteously, "if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away!"

Jesus took a step still nearer. He spoke but one word, but in it was the old thrill of His Mastership to her—

"Mary!"

That thrilling call evoked his image, yet with a feeling of eerie terror: the ghostliness of a resurrection from the dead! *Could* it be He? As she turned and saw Him, her eyes were big and black with fright. . . . Yet on the bough the linnets were caroling joyously, the morning lay exquisitely beautiful, all Nature was rising from the winter's sleep, the very birds seemed to be singing: *"He is risen!* HE IS RISEN!"

The Magdalene smiled a timid, half uncertain smile of recognition, and barely breathed:

"—Master!"

She was sinking slowly to her knees before the radiant Vision. . . . She wanted to take the hem of His garment and bring it to her lips —even as she had adored Him in the earthly Ministry. . . . But He gently stopped her.

"Touch Me not," said Jesus, "because I am not yet ascended to My Father!"

Was there somewhat mystic and apparitional in that bright Radiance, something neither carnal nor spiritual whereof the hands

were not to lay hold? His next words (which she drank in eagerly) were both a command and a triumph and vindication of that precious Faith of theirs that had seemed so hopelessly shattered by the tragic events of Calvary.

"But go to all My brethren," said Jesus, "and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father,—and to My God, and your God!"

With the beautiful assurance of the Life everlasting, He left her. Jesus had conquered Death! She knew that, would carry that message to John and Peter and James and Mark and the rest; would tell them the glorious news with all the eloquence and magnetism of her clear vision and fixed belief, till they too were gladdened and comforted and renewed by the glorious fact of the Resurrection Morn. . . .

Nay, perchance, He might give them all that wondrous Vision of death o'ercome and their spiritual King of Kings restored, before the Father claimed Him to His blessed seat Above!

The tears of the Magdalene were tears of ecstatic thanksgiving now, as she hurried to her solemn and yet joyous task.

CHAPTER XXX

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY"

THE Upper Room to which the two messengers hastened, was filled with a discouraged lot of men who still foregathered—though they knew not why!

Some were still utterly broken by grief. Others sat in a sort of calm despair, numbed both as to spirit and bodily sense. Peter stood day-dreaming with a sad expression. John knelt with head bowed or supported by his arms, occasionally looking off to recapture and envision that tender farewell scene wherein he received the sacred charge of Jesus's Mother.

Matthew tried to make his stylus carve sentences in the wax of his tablets, but found it most difficult. . . . There was no denouement to his story! . . . . The beautiful spiritual Kingdom founded by his Master, the new Ethic of all-embracing love and brotherliness, crashed (or so it then seemed to him) before

the awful fact of Golgotha. How could they—who had fled and hid away in the last tragic ordeal of the Master—restore that Kingdom now by their own erring and hapless selves?

"I go to prepare a place for you!" Several of the Disciples remembered the exquisite saying of Jesus and its touching corollary: "—that where I am, there ye may be also."

Had He not also foretold the rebuilding of the destroyed "temple of the body" on the third day, or more plainly, "I lay down My life that I might take it again?"

They pondered these things. . . .

Alas! they could not relate them to their sad state, leaderless, crushed, suspect, the gibe and mockery of the Temple rulers—and all too vividly they recalled the heavy-lidded tomb of the Master's inanimate body—the ropings and the sealings—the Temple watch before whom they had scattered, and whose sole duty it was to guard the poor grave. Was, then, all that they had felt and loved and gloried in but the fantasy of a dream? . . . Was there no Jesus for them—evermore? . . .

The heavy door of the Upper Room bore the semblance of a Cross. The full-length centre

timber constituted the vertical; and the cross-bar the transverse beam.

There was but one lamp in the Room. Its slender rays and large shadows gave a chiaro-scuro effect, weird and almost ghostly. The brightest beams hit and reflected from the parts of the door in high relief, outlining the Cross perfectly. . . .

Gradually the high surface seemed to glow with an increased lustre. . . . Upon it the image of a Face and Figure formed. . . . A dazzling light began to come from the juncture of the Cross and yet—strangely enough—the outline of the Cross itself seemed to dissolve!

In its place, an Apparition—or Reality? Something of starry Presence was coming *through* that shut and barred door, even as in all eras 'tis thought that the Spirit can at will penetrate and pass through crass Matter!

The face was of an exquisite beauty, the figure tall and clothed in white, the hands out-stretched in all-embracing salutation, while the well-remembered, well-beloved words of the lost Leader came clear and distinct to the ears of the startled Disciples:

"Peace be unto you!"

The Vision smiled and made a gesture of

benediction. Again the hands were outstretched, this time the palms outward—in each palm, the black coagulation of a wound.

"It is Jesus!" said the men to one another in awed whispers. They stood up, not daring to speak as the Figure advanced slowly to the centre of the Room. . . . The Visitant turned first to one and then to the next group, raising His hands again in that gracious benison.

Peter fell sobbing at his Master's feet. . . . A kindly hand was laid on his head. . . . John knelt on the other side. . . . The Lord who loved him so deeply, clasped him in a fold of His robe. . . . A little farther away knelt or sat, straining forward with looks of passionate adoration, James the brother of John; the black-bearded Bartholomew; the mystic-eyed Zealot, Simeon; the lesser James, Andrew the brother of Peter, the venerable Thaddeus, and the Greek—named Philip. Matthew found the denouement of his story, the fruition of his once blasted hopes of the Kingdom. . . . The men did not ask whence or how or why the Visitant, trailing the clouds of His ineffable glory. . . . It was enough that Golgotha was *not* the end but only the beginning.

Little Mark and the disciple Thomas kept the outer gate down below, to which Mary Mother and Mary Magdalene had hastened with their glad news.

"He is risen! *He is risen!*" cried the Magdalene ecstatically. "Oh, the joy and wonder of it—

"He told me to tell you all: Say unto my brethren, I ascend unto My Father and your Father,—and to My God, and your God!"

"It is true, blessed be Jehovah!" said the Mother, with a look of holiness. "My Son, Which was crucified, dead and buried, hath indeed risen from the tomb!"

Mark did not wait a second to carry the message up yonder. In a trice he was up the stairway, and he bounded into the Room where in sudden transfixed wonderment he gazed at the Visitant—his beloved Lord—of whose Resurrection as narrated by the Marys he was about to cry out and shout. . . .

The little fellow's wonderment gave way to access of realized joy. . . . He was weeping the happy tears of tense boyish adoration gratified at last. . . . Jesus took him to His breast, lovingly caressing him. . . .

On the lowest stair Thomas was arguing

with Mary. His slow practical mind lacked the intuition of the feminine. He credited the healing miracles of Jesus, for he had witnessed them. He knew that this Man was no ordinary man, rather the anointed King of spiritual empiry,—yea, he would one day suffer and die for Him—but was it possible for Jesus to bridge Death's dark abyss? . . . Women had a peculiar fatuity about apparitions, anyhow.

"Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails," cried Thomas, "and put my finger into the print of the nails—and thrust my hand into His side—I will NOT believe!"

The three went up the stairs and entered the Room. . . . Thomas held the door for the two women to pass. . . . They stood quietly just inside the doorway, the Mother showing serene joy that her vision was true—but not surprise, whilst the Magdalene seemed again almost overcome by the renewed wonder and awe of it, then gazed fixedly on her Saviour with delight and affection. . . .

Thomas still held the door. . . . His right hand was groping uncertainly in the direction of the Figure. . . . He was taking his fill of looking, and amazement was written on his features. . . . "See, it is the Master!" whispered

two or three of the Disciples near him. . . . Poor doubting Thomas did not even hear. . . . That sight yonder was causing his eyes to bulge; his hands were now clenched, and he strained forward with every fibre rigid in his being! . . . Slowly Thomas approached the white-robed Figure. . . .

Jesus stood before him with extended palms. There was a sad little smile on his face.

"Thomas," cried Jesus softly, "reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side,—and be not faithless but believing!"

Thomas was kneeling at Jesus's feet now. He put each of his hands into the print of the nails, then looked up to his Lord with a look half of agony, half of adoration. He reached his right hand into Jesus's robe to the mark of the wound in the Crucified's pierced side, then drew it back remorsefully—again the look of half agony, half of adoration; gazed up at Jesus with perfect faith; lowered his head, beating his temple with his hand contritely, and sobbed out:

"My Lord—and My God!"

The right hand of the Risen Lord was over His breast where the doubting Disciple had

touched it. His left lay kindly on the head of the remorseful doubter.

"Thomas," replied Jesus slowly, "because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed—"

His gaze left Thomas and sought the far spaces of the World, and His spirit imaged mayhap the uncounted millions and billions of her peoples who—long after He was gone—should be made spiritually whole by the simple trust in His message. . . .

The upraised, mystic eyes, and the beatific smile that gradually clothed his features, seemed to envisage all Humanity with the kindly Blessing.

"——but blessed are they that have NOT seen—and yet have believed!" said Jesus.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE WORLD'S TRUE HOPE

"On the third day He rose . . . and ascended into Heaven!"

The power of Jesus did not die. The sublime Faith of his followers conquered the ancient World. It has created Christendom. Availed even more than their Faith—wonderful as it was—the sublime beauty and spirituality of His teachings.

His the Name above every other name!

The worship of sorrow, the martyrdom of the Divine Principle of goodness that is Humanity's only hope, has consecrated it not only to the Christian but has made it venerated by well-thinking Jew, Mohammedan, Brahmin, Buddhist or Agnostic.

Who does not know, love and appreciate Jesus, does not understand fully the course of Man's progression and the Divine *saltus* or leap that He achieved, in behalf of all Humanity, to the life spiritual and thereby the life eternal.

Forever and ever our Divine Saviour lives in the hearts of men! Resurrection physical fact or outer symbol of His inner renewal and regeneration of us, the beauty and the significance of this story shall never pass. . . .

For it was a glorious and yet pathetic leavetaking. A reunion, and yet a parting. A mutual recognition, and then a partly triumphant and partly tragic Goodbye!

See them now grouped around Him! His direct benison or handclasp with Matthew, Mark, James and John; His fingers of benediction extended to those a little further away; Peter waiting, there, for the beloved handclasp of the Lord . . . which as soon as he received, he dropped to his knees and put both hands against the breast of Jesus who lovingly caressed him. . . .

The serenely joyful Mary Mother approached her Son. . . . Her wistfulness somehow was not as the tragedy of the others. . . . Mother-like, she wanted Him for her own in this vale of tears. . . . But she knew that He was God's, and God's alone. . . . Tenderly the Son put an arm around her whilst His other hand still caressed Peter. . . . The

Mother nodded and softly acknowledged their deep and special relationship. . . .

Behind the Mother came the Magdalene, a more perturbed spirit, sorrowing bitterly that He must go, yet adoring Him in timid ecstasy, venturing barely to touch the hand with which He embraced His Mother; then withdrawing and kneeling humbly as that hand was raised in benediction.

Little Mark promised Him that he would one day write the Gospel story too. Had not Matthew taught him,—Matthew, the reverent author of the first of the "Good News"?

He commanded Peter: "Feed My Sheep!" It would be the final proof of that renewed Faith that Peter—in the court of Caiaphas—thrice denied. And lovingly Peter promised. . . . There was little said, much that was thought, many a lifetime of feeling in that concentrated short space of goodbyes among these sorrowing fourteen and the loved Master!

For the last time the saintly glowing Figure —apparently earthly, and yet unearthly—walked about amongst them. An embrace for John—the blessing of Matthew's book—a hand on Peter's shoulder—a second long farewell to His Mother—a salute to the more distant

ones—and He was slowly, almost imperceptibly withdrawing from them, whilst Peter made as if to crawl towards the retreating Figure on his knees, the Magdalene sobbed, and all gazed after Him most wistfully.

He stood at last where the sweep of his arms could symbolically embrace them each and all. His momentous message—and their mission—was in his final words, the last they ever were to hear:

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature. For, behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you!"

By the Holy Spirit, He would indeed be with them alway!

Let us leave them in that attitude of prayer and promise and adoration, kneeling or straining forward there if haply they might yet catch some further word of His beloved teaching, gain yet some wondrous, undreamed virtue through His gentle benison and benediction!

It is they—not He—fading out of the final vista. They are temporal and finite; He, once mortal like themselves, is taking on immortality.

We see no longer the faithful followers but only Jesus, His glory and beauty spread o'er all the world. He stands above our mighty modern skyline, Himself asking the question that questing Pilate once asked the multitude:

"What will ye do with this Jesus?"

Yes,—

"The King's in His Heaven,
All's right with the world!"

Let us accept Him humbly, reverently, for the Guide of our lives!

THE END

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